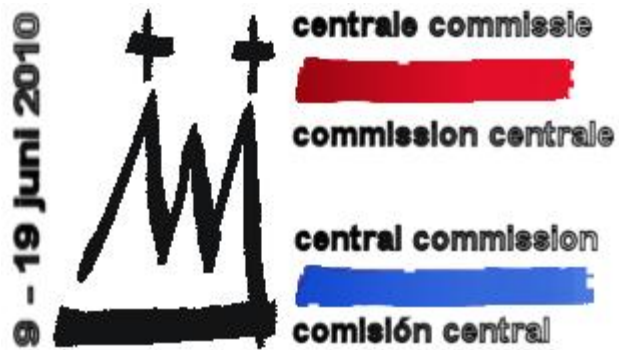


CENTRAL COMMISSIONS

Tilburg June 9 – 19, 2010



CENTRAL COMMISSIONS 2010 – PARTICIPANTS

1 **Abbot General** Dom EAMON Fitzgerald

Coordinating Commission

2 Promoter Dom BERNARDO Bonowitz
3 Promotrix Mother BENEDICT Thissen
4 Vice-Promoter Dom ALEJANDRO Castro
5 Vice-Promotrix Mother MARIE Fahy
6 3rd member Dom DANIEL Hombergen
7 Mother MARIE-PASCALE Dran

Regional Delegates

8 CAN Dom BEDE Stockill, Calvaire
9 CNE Dom ARMAND Veilleux, Scourmont
10 ISLES Dom PETER Garvey, Bolton
11 NED Dom MANU Van Hecke, Sint Sixtus
12 ORIENS Dom FILOMENO Cinco, Guimaras
13 Mother CECILIA Aoki, Tenshien
14 RAFMA Dom CHARLES Amihere, Bamenda
15 Mother FLORENÇA Kalumbo Raimondo, Huambo
16 RE Dom ISIDORO Anguita Fontecha, Huerta
17 RéCiF Mother MARIE-CHRISTINE Vilmain, Le Rivet
18 REI Dom PATRICK Olive, Sept-Fons
19 REM Mother ANNE-EMMANUELLE Devêche, Blauvac
20 REMILA Mother AURORA Chávez, El Encuentro
21 Dom JUAN ANTONIO Sánchez, Jarabacoa
22 US Mother KATHY de Vico, Redwoods

Abbot General's Council

23 Dom TIMOTHY Kelly, Procurator
24 Mother DANIELÉ Levrard
25 Mother REGINA Nebo
26 Dom SANTIAGO FIDEL Ordoñez
27 Dom DAVID Lavich

Invited

Dom Bernardus PEETERS, abbot of the host monastery;
For a few days - Sister PAMELA Clinton, central secretary for formation.

Interpreters

28 French-English Dom Casimir Bernas, Holy Trinity
29 French-Spanish Father José Luis Monge, Viaceli
30 English-French Sister Laurence Gouezin, Campénéac
31 English-Spanish Father Laurence Curran, Valdedios/Sobrado
32 Spanish-French Brother Xavier Moralès, Acey
33 Spanish-English Brother Martin Charles, Miraflores

Secretaries

34 English Father William Dingwall, Casa Generalizia
35 French Sister Madeleine Gendry, Echourgnac
36 Spanish Sister Mariasther Briso-Montiano, Carrizo/Wrentham

INTRODUCTION

The Abbot General opened the meeting, welcoming everyone, "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." He thanked Dom Bernardus – who took part in the meeting - and his community for their warm welcome. Dom Eamon also thanked the regional representatives for their hard work preparing for this meeting of the Central Commissions.

M. Benedict, elected promotrix at the last MGM, acted as moderator for the morning session. The other members of the coordinating commission took their turns sharing fulfilling this service. The main task of the Central Commissions is to organise the suggestions made by the regional conferences, to draw up the programme of the MGM 2011, to determine how the questions will be prepared before the MGM and to decide by which procedure each one will be treated.

There are 27 voters: 16 for the Central Commission of Abbots
 12 for the Central Commission of Abbesses

The Abbot General votes in both Commissions.

Votes will be taken by a show of hands except for the election of persons, which will be carried out by secret ballot.

The Central Commissions of 2007 at Cardeña took the following votes:

VOTE 35: *WE SUGGEST THAT IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE CENTRAL COMMISSIONS TO PERFORM THEIR TASK IN A MORE CREATIVE WAY, IN THE SETTING UP OF THE MGM THEY NOT BE LIMITED TO THE VOTES OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCES.*

YES 23 NO 1 ABS 1 **Proposition accepted**

VOTE 36: *IN ORDER TO DO THIS, AT THE BEGINNING OF THEIR MEETING, THE MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMISSIONS COULD GIVE SUFFICIENT TIME TO IDENTIFYING AND DEEPENING THE PRINCIPAL THEMES THAT THE REGIONS HAVE FACED.*

YES 21 NO 1 ABS 3 **Proposition accepted**

Since it was not specified for which CC meeting they are valid, they can be applied here. (This applies only to the Central Commissions Meeting, not the MGM).

PREPARATION OF THE MGM

1. HOUSE REPORTS

1.1 Composition

Four regions mentioned this point and asked that house reports deal specifically with the question of formation in the community. But they must not focus solely on this theme to the neglect of other aspects of community life. The theme of formation must appear in the house report, and should mention how the community leads its monastic life and how it is capable of transmitting the charism.

VOTE 1

WE WISH TO HAVE WORKING PAPERS IN ORDER TO HELP THE COMMUNITIES IN THE PREPARATION OF THE HOUSE REPORTS.

YES: 14 NO: 9 ABS: 3 Accepted

VOTE 2

WE WISH THAT THE DOCUMENTS TO HELP THE COMMUNITIES IN THE PREPARATION OF THEIR HOUSE REPORTS BE: BRIEF, WITH STIMULATING QUESTIONS ON DIFFERENT AREAS OF MONASTIC LIFE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF FORMATION; A HELP, NOT A DIRECTIVE; TAKE INTO ACCOUNT VOTE 27 OF THE CENTRAL COMMISSIONS OF 2010.

YES: 27 NO: 0 ABS:0 Accepted Unanimous

VOTE 3

WE WISH THE HOUSE REPORTS TO SHARE WITH THE ORDER THE REAL STATE OF THE COMMUNITY.

YES: 27 NO: 0 ABS: 0 Accepted Unanimous

VOTE 4

WE WISH THE HOUSE REPORTS TO TOUCH CONCRETELY THE QUESTION OF FORMATION.

YES: 21 NO: 2 ABS: 4 Accepted

VOTE 5

WE WISH THAT THE HOUSE REPORTS DEAL WITH THEIR LIVED EXPERIENCE OF MONASTIC LIFE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF FORMATION.

YES: 20 NO: 2 ABS: 5 Accepted

Nominations and election of the person to prepare the document mentioned above:

M. Daniele, Generalate

M. Anne-Emmanuelle, Blauvac

Dom Carlos, Sobrado 19 elected

Dom Armand, Scourmont

Dom Manu, Sint Sixtus

Dom Bernardus, Tilburg

Dom Bernardo, Azul

Dom David, Tarrawarra

1.2 Treatment of the House Reports

VOTE 6

WE WISH TO HAVE AN AD HOC COMMISSION AT THIS CENTRAL COMMISSIONS MEETING TO DRAW UP THE PROCEDURE FOR STUDYING THE HOUSE REPORTS IN THE MIXED COMMISSIONS.

YES: 24 NO: 1 ABS: 2 Accepted

This ad hoc commission will be elected to rework the text approved by the Central Commissions of 2007.

Elected: Dom Armand, Scourmont
 Dom Isidoro, Huerta
 M. Daniele, Generalate

After two discussions with the members of the Central Commissions, Dom Armand presented the final draft and explained the modifications that were made to the Cardena text according to the suggestions of the Central Commissions.

- Everything is presented in a single text, while in 2007 there was also a practical guide. Instructions are printed in smaller type.
- The father immediate is mentioned during the writing of the house reports (1.1), in the work of the mixed commissions (2.1.1 and 2.2.1) and in the follow up (2.3.3). He is always to be consulted by the mixed commission before their study of the report of his daughter house.
- The superior of the house being studied is always given the opportunity to speak to the relevant mixed commission.
- There doesn't seem to be any reason to justify forming a liaison commission. The secretaries of the mixed commissions can communicate any decisions made to the coordinating commission. The coordinating commission will then decide what needs to be communicated to the plenary assembly.
- For more complicated or delicate matters, the mixed commissions will ask the coordinating commission to create an ad hoc commission, which will transmit the results of its work to the mixed commission.

The document "House Reports and their Treatment at the MGM 2011" can be found in the appendices.

VOTE 7

WE ACCEPT THE TEXT OF THE DOCUMENT FOR THE TREATMENT OF THE HOUSE REPORTS AT THE MGM 2011.

YES 27

Accepted

Unanimous

1.3 Mixed Commissions

Most of the regions mentioned this question. The following points were raised:

- The procedure of 2007 which had the regions study the house reports and then choose which reports to send to the mixed commissions was deemed unsatisfactory.
- The role the regions were supposed to play in this procedure was not clear and it was very time consuming.
- The pastoral role of the regions is better exercised during regional meetings. The authority of the regions in the context of the MGM is unclear.
- The reality of the regions is important, but it has no juridical standing.
- When studying a house report, a mixed commission can always call in other persons from the same region as the house being studied to help clarify the situation, especially the president of the region in question.
- It is important that the plenary assembly have a clear idea of the situation of each house, perhaps only a synthesis for houses with no real problems.
- The mixed commissions should not make important decisions without informing the General Chapter, which has final responsibility.
- More complex situations should be communicated to the coordinating commission, which can form an ad hoc commission after having consulted the abbot general and his council.
- The father immediate normally follows up on decisions concerning his daughter houses, but if he is involved personally, the mixed commission should designate someone to do the follow up.

VOTE 8

WE WANT ALL THE HOUSE REPORTS TO BE STUDIED IN THE MIXED COMMISSIONS.

YES: 27 NO: 0 ABS: 0 Accepted Unanimous

VOTE 9

WE WISH THAT THE MIXED COMMISSIONS HAVE THE POWERS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTERS AS THEY STUDY THE HOUSE REPORTS.

YES: 20 NO: 5 ABS: 2 Accepted

VOTE 10

WE WISH THAT ALL THE DECISIONS MADE IN THE NAME OF THE GENERAL CHAPTERS BY A MIXED COMMISSION BE COMMUNICATED TO THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY.

YES: 25 NO: 0 ABS: 1 Accepted

VOTE 11

WE WISH THAT WHEN A VERY COMPLEX SITUATION IS PRESENTED, THE MIXED COMMISSIONS SHOULD TRANSMIT IT TO THE COORDINATING COMMISSION TO ESTABLISH AN AD HOC COMMISSION COMPOSED OF PERSONS CHOSEN BECAUSE OF THEIR EXPERIENCE AND CAPACITY TO INTERVENE IN THIS SPECIFIC SITUATION.

YES: 23 NO: 2 ABS: 2 Accepted

VOTE 12

WE WISH IN SETTING UP THIS AD HOC COMMISSION THE COORDINATING COMMISSION ALWAYS CONSULTS THE ABBOT GENERAL AND HIS COUNCIL.

YES: 17 NO: 1 ABS: 8 Accepted

VOTE 13

WE WISH THAT THE FOLLOW UP OF DECISIONS MADE BY A MIXED COMMISSION BE DONE NORMALLY BY THE FATHER IMMEDIATE, IF THIS IS NOT OPPORTUNE, THE MIXED COMMISSION WILL INDICATE WHO IS TO DO THE FOLLOW UP.

YES: 14 NO: 9 ABS: 2 Accepted

Delegates**VOTE 14**

WE WISH THAT THE DELEGATES HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE IN THE MIXED COMMISSIONS.

YES: 13 NO: 10 ABS: 4 Accepted

1.4 Document “The State of the Order”

A strong desire was expressed to produce another “State of the Order” document. Only a few regions discussed this matter during their regional meetings.

- By synthesis, we mean not only a resume of the house reports but of everything that happened during the MGM. It would be helpful if the superiors could return to their communities with a document of this kind.
- At the last MGM, the ad hoc commission appointed to write this document found it difficult to complete during the Chapter.
- The document must also highlight new elements that were brought up during the Chapter and that could give a new direction to the Order.
- If we want a more elaborate, “prophetic” document, it should be composed after the MGM, perhaps by the abbot general and his council, with the help of a few capitulants.

Because the document is to be primarily a synthesis of both the house reports and the principal themes that arose during the Chapters, it was decided that it should be prepared afterwards. The

work will be entrusted to the abbot general and his council, along with two capitulants elected at the beginning of the MGM.

While the following votes generally reflect the will of the regions, they were somewhat divided as to when the document should be prepared. Three regions wanted the document to be read at the end of the MGM, as a sort of conclusion to the proceedings, with one region adding that it should be redacted and approved by the MGM. In contrast, four regions pronounced themselves agreeable to the document's redaction after the MGM. Three regions were in favour of the abbot general and his council overseeing the production of the document, and one region suggested the addition of two capitulants (one abbot and one abbess) chosen by the MGM, to be added to the team.

VOTE 15

WE WOULD LIKE THAT A DOCUMENT ON THE STATE OF THE ORDER BE DRAWN UP.

YES: 23 NO: 2 ABS: 1 Accepted

VOTE 16

WE WOULD LIKE THIS DOCUMENT TO BE A SYNTHESIS OF THE STUDY OF THE HOUSE REPORTS.

YES: 15 NO: 10 ABS: 2 Accepted

VOTE 17

WE WOULD LIKE THIS DOCUMENT TO BE PRINCIPALLY A SYNTHESIS OF THE SUBJECTS AND THE PRINCIPAL ASPECTS WHICH HAVE EMERGED DURING THE MGM.

YES: 17 NO: 5 ABS: 4 Accepted

VOTE 18

WE WOULD LIKE THIS DOCUMENT ON THE STATE OF THE ORDER TO BE DRAWN UP DURING THE MGM.

YES: 12 NO: 13 ABS: 2 Rejected

It was not necessary to take the votes: "WE WOULD LIKE THE COMMISSIONS WHICH WILL DRAW UP THIS REPORT TO BE COMPOSED OF THREE CAPITULANTS" and "WE WOULD LIKE THIS DOCUMENT TO BE DRAWN UP AFTER THE MGM".

VOTE 19

WE WOULD LIKE THE DOCUMENT ON THE STATE OF THE ORDER TO BE REDACTED AFTER THE MGM UNDER THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ABBOT GENERAL AND HIS COUNCIL.

YES: 10 NO: 11 ABS: 4 Rejected

VOTE 20

WE WOULD LIKE THE DOCUMENT ON THE STATE OF THE ORDER TO BE ENTRUSTED TO THE ABBOT GENERAL AND HIS COUNCIL WITH TWO CAPITULANTS (ABBOT AND ABBESS) ELECTED BY THE MGM AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MGM.

YES: 17 NO: 1 ABS: 9 Accepted

2. REGIONAL REPORTS

- Not everyone wanted to have regional reports at every MGM. ORIENS AND RAFMA in particular find this task difficult because of the linguistic and cultural diversity that characterise these regions.
- It would be good that the reports focus on formation and that they describe the region's experience in this area over the past ten years or so: activities, needs etc. (REMILA)
- Other regions did not want to include this theme in their reports, and especially not to be limited to only this theme. The reports ought to present the most significant events that have occurred since the last MGM and their length should be limited (CNE and RE).
- The regional reports should not become a synthesis of the regions house reports (RE).
- It is normal that the regions be given time to meet during the MGM, but they must avoid discussing questions that are already on the programme because of the risk of forming special interest groups, which could disturb the normal functioning of the general chapters.
- It is not clear what role the regions play during the MGM, since they only have pastoral authority. The possibility of giving the regions the juridical authority to deal with regional issues during the course of regional meetings could be studied.

VOTE 21

WE WISH TO HAVE REGIONAL REPORTS AT THE MGM 2011.

YES: 16 NO: 11 ABS: 0 Accepted

VOTE 22

WE WISH THAT THE REGIONAL REPORTS PRESENT THE MAIN FEATURES ARISING FROM THE HOUSE REPORTS OF THE REGION.

YES: 18 NO: 8 ABS: 1 Accepted

VOTE 23

WE WISH THAT THE REGIONAL REPORTS PRESENT THE REALITY OF FORMATION IN THE REGION.

YES: 21 NO: 3 ABS: 3 Accepted

VOTE 24

WE WISH THAT THE REGIONAL REPORTS PRESENT THE REALITY OF FORMATION DURING THE PAST TEN YEARS IN THE REGION.

YES: 0 NO: 25 ABS: 2 Rejected

VOTE 25

WE WANT THE LENGTH OF THE REGIONAL REPORTS TO BE LIMITED TO A MAXIMUM OF ONE PAGE.

YES: 24 NO: 1 ABS: 2 Accepted

VOTE 26

WE WISH THE REGIONAL REPORTS TO BE PREPARED BEFORE THE MGM 2011.

YES: 27 NO: 0 ABS: 0 Accepted

VOTE 27

WE WISH THE REGIONS TO PRESENT THEIR REPORT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MGM.

YES: 24 NO: 0 ABS: 3 Accepted

3. MAIN THEME: FORMATION

Formation as the transmission of life will be the major theme of the upcoming MGM. The Regions have been reflecting on the matter and each regional representative brought the fruit of their discussions to the Central Commissions.

In general, a practical and concrete, as opposed to theoretical, approach to the topic of formation was chosen. The USA and CNE regions specifically requested this. It was also evident in votes taken by the NED and ISLES regions, each of which requested that the relationship between aspects of our daily life and formation be examined. REI also mentioned "specific and urgent questions". This orientation was confirmed by vote:

VOTE 28

WE WISH THAT THE THEME OF FORMATION AS TRANSMISSION OF LIFE BE TREATED CONCRETELY AND PRACTICALLY RATHER THAN ABSTRACTLY AND THEORETICALLY.

YES: 27 NO: 0 ABS: 0 Accepted

During the discussions, it was emphasised that Cistercian life itself is formative and that it would, therefore, be helpful to think about the various aspects of our monastic praxis in terms of their formative value. The mixed commissions will be asked to reflect on this.

VOTE 29

WE WISH TO REFLECT IN THE MIXED COMMISSIONS ON HOW ALL ASPECTS OF OUR LIFE (PRAYER, LITURGY, COMMUNITY LIFE, WORK, LECTIO ETC.) ARE FORMATIVE.

YES: 25 NO: 0 ABS: 2 Accepted

While it was the unanimous desire of the Central Commissions to adopt a practical approach, certain more theoretical questions were also deemed important. REM suggested an exploration of the role of asceticism in the context of formation, and REMILA suggested that formation should foster perseverance on the way of transformative union with Christ. REI requested a document "presenting a renewed approach to the Cistercian anthropology", and REM wanted to examine the "actualization of the Cistercian anthropology in the setting of formation. The importance of the subject was recognized during the discussions, but in the end, it seems that the more practical approach held sway. The proposal for conferences on by a Christian anthropologist and sociologist were both rejected (Votes 42 & 43).

Regarding more specific themes for reflection, three regions in particular produced stimulating and well-developed reflections. ORIENS, in a report on formation produced during their regional meeting, mentioned as characteristic of Eastern culture a deep appreciation of learning wisdom from tradition, by imitating and learning from experience. A strong emphasis is also placed on formation through life rather than through courses. They also emphasised that discernment, that is, learning how to reflect on concrete experience in faith guided by the superior and the formator, is an important part of formation. In this sense, discernment also operates on the level of the whole community and is thus a critical component of ongoing formation.

REMILA organised the results of its reflection under three main headings: differentiated formation (essentially, adapting formation to gender), forming for perseverance, and the importance of creative fidelity (particularly in the context of enculturation). The contribution of the Canadian region consisted of a report, given at their regional meeting, of the community of Rougemont's (O. Cist) recent experience with young candidates and the adaptations they have made to ease their introduction to monastic life.

A rich and lively discussion followed developing and adding to these contributions. The most important ideas were grouped together under three main headings by the coordinating commission,

Candidates:

- Positive values for young people
- Their world view
- Monastic values that meet the needs of people today
- Sociological and anthropological factors
- Formation in work
- Virtual reality and instant communication
- Formation for perseverance
- Adherence to Christian faith
- Affectivity and emotional maturity
- Importance of discernment

Formators:

- Living models of *conversatio*
- Attention to what the young ones are telling us
- Capacity of the formators to relate to a wide range of candidates
- Dialogue between the generations
- The capacity to embody and communicate the relationship between the physical and the spiritual
- Ability to recognise a person's readiness to move to the next stage of formation
- Differentiated formation
- Formation in time of crisis
- Balance between challenge and support

The Community:

- Social and anthropological aspects
- How to integrate ongoing physical limitations
- Dialogue between the generations
- Adherence to Christian faith
- Ongoing spiritual formation
- Creative fidelity

It was decided that a working paper should be prepared for each of the three headings, and people were chosen to carry out the work.

VOTE 30

WE WISH TO HAVE WORKING PAPERS ON FORMATION FOR THE MGM 2011.

YES: 21 NO: 2 ABS: 3 Accepted

Candidates

P. Emmanuel, La Trappe
Fr. Eduardo, Huerta
D. Augustine Roberts
M. Lucia, Nasi Pani
D. Francisco, Miraflores
Br. Jose Antonio, San Isidro

elected

Formators

Dom Bernardo Olivera
Fr. Michael, Lamanabi
M. Maureen, Abakaliki
Dom David, Tarrawarra
Sr. Michelle, Glencairn
Fr. Antonio Maria, San Isidro

elected

Community

Sr. Laurentia, Nasu
Sr. Adelaida, Huambo
M. Magdalena, Maria Frieden
Fr. Marc-Andre, Maromby
Dom Bertrand, Awhum
M. Maureen, Wrentham

elected

The role of the superior as formator, as well as the importance of the superior's personal, ongoing formation, was emphasised.

VOTE 31

WE WISH TO REFLECT AND SHARE IN THE MIXED COMMISSIONS ON HOW THE SUPERIORS ARE WORKING ON THEIR OWN ONGOING FORMATION TOWARDS THEIR TRANSFORMATION IN CHRIST.

YES: 17 NO: 5 ABS: 5 Accepted

Finally, the question of how practically to deal with the topic at the MGM was discussed. Firstly, the wealth and depth of the regions' work on formation was acknowledged. A synthesis was proposed to make this work available to capitulants in an accessible format.

VOTE 32

WE WISH TO HAVE A SYNTHESIS MADE OF THE DOCUMENTS ON FORMATION PRESENTED IN THE REGIONAL MEETINGS.

YES: 17 NO: 7 ABS: 3 Accepted

VOTE 33

WE WISH THAT THE CENTRAL SECRETARY FOR FORMATION WILL MAKE THIS SYNTHESIS

YES 27 Accepted Unanimous

The nature of the theme seemed to favour personal testimony. Three superiors were therefore requested to share their own experience of formation as transmission of life with the MGM. This is related to the question of why some communities thrive while others do not. Conferences were deemed useful, and a preference for members of the Order rather than outside experts was expressed. Previous experience with panels, however, has not been positive, and this mode of presentation was rejected.

VOTE 34

WE WISH SEVERAL SUPERIORS TO DESCRIBE THEIR EXPERIENCE OF FORMATION AS TRANSMISSION OF LIFE.

YES: 17 NO: 3 ABS: 6 Accepted

Votes 37-39 (persons to share their experience of formation as transmission of life) by secret ballot.

M. Rosaria, Vitorchiano **elected**

Dom Patrick, Sept-Fons **elected**

Dom Bernardo, Novo Munco **elected**

M. Rosaria declined election. Nominations were taken.

M. Marion, Crozet

M. Monica, Valserena

M. Giovanna, Matutum

M. Martha, Gedono

M. Maureen, Wrentham

M. Cecilia, Tenshien **elected**

M. Benedict, Arnhem

M. Rosemary, Tautra

VOTE 35

WE WANT TO HAVE CONFERENCES AT THE MGM ON FORMATION

YES: 23 NO: 0 ABS: 4 Accepted

VOTE 36

WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A CONFERENCE BY THE ABBOT GENERAL ON FORMATION.

YES: 26 NO: 0 ABS: 1 Accepted

VOTE 37

BY A CHRISTIAN EXPERT IN SOCIOLOGY

YES: 1 NO: 19 ABS: 7 Rejected

VOTE 38

BY A CHRISTIAN EXPERT IN ANTHROPOLOGY

YES: 9 NO: 14 ABS: 4 Rejected

VOTE 39

BY CAPITULANTS

YES: 14 NO: 3 ABS: 10 Accepted

VOTE 40

WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A PANEL.

YES: 4 NO: 19 ABS: 4 Rejected

VOTE 41

WE WISH THE THEME OF FORMATION TO BE TREATED BY ORDINARY PROCEDURE.

YES: 0 NO: 24 ABS: 2 Rejected

BY EXTRAORDINARY PROCEDURE

YES: 26 NO: 0 ABS: 1 Accepted

3.1 The Ratio

Finally, there remained a small juridical matter related to formation. The proposed revision of §42 of the Ratio, prepared by the central secretary for formation, needs to be treated at the upcoming MGM.

VOTE 42

WE WANT THE PROPOSAL FOR THE NEW VERSION OF NO. 42 OF THE RATIO SYNTHESIZED BY THE CENTRAL SECRETARY TO BE TREATED BY SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURE.

YES: 18 NO: 6 ABS: 2 Accepted

4. OTHER POINTS TO BE ADDED TO THE PROGRAMME

4.1 Structures of the Order

4.1.1 Fathers Immediate

Following the suggestions made at the MGM of 2008, a separately bound and updated version of the vademecum for the father immediate was requested. During the discussion, it was pointed out that a vademecum refers to a compendium of all the existing legislation and regulation on a certain topic.

Wider discussion concerning the role of the father immediate as a fundamental structure of the order and the various difficulties encountered in fulfilling that role today resulted in the decision to add this to the programme of the MGM, and to the election of an ad hoc commission to draw up a working paper on the subject. It was thought that this topic required a commission of 5 persons, including a member of the abbot general's council, fathers immediate and an abbess, in order to draw from the widest practical experience possible.

VOTE 43

WE WISH TO HAVE AN UPDATED VADEMECUM ON THE FATHER IMMEDIATE BY THE LAW COMMISSION.

YES: 26 NO: 0 ABS: 1 Accepted

VOTE 44

WE WISH TO HAVE A REFLECTION ON THE CHALLENGES BEING FACED BY THE FATHERS IMMEDIATE IN THE FULFILMENT OF THEIR FUNCTION.

YES: 26 NO: 0 ABS: 1 Accepted

VOTE 45

WE WISH TO SET UP AN AD HOC COMMISSION TO PREPARE A WORKING PAPER.

YES: 27 NO: 0 ABS: 0 Accepted

VOTE 46

WE WISH THE AD HOC COMMISSION DESIGNATED TO PREPARE THE WORKING PAPER ON THE CHALLENGES BEING FACED BY THE FATHERS IMMEDIATE BE COMPOSED OF:

-FATHERS IMMEDIATE ONLY

Yes: 0

-FATHERS IMMEDIATE + A MEMBER OF THE ABBOT GENERAL'S COUNCIL

Yes: 10

-FATHERS IMMEDIATE, A MEMBER OF THE ABBOT GENERAL'S COUNCIL + AN ABBESS

Yes: 19 Accepted

VOTE 47

THE AD HOC COMMISSION WILL BE COMPOSED OF:

-3 MEMBERS

Yes: 5

-5 MEMBERS

Yes: 22

Accepted

VOTE 48

WE WANT THIS TOPIC TO BE PLACED ON THE PROGRAMME OF THE MGM OF 2011.

YES: 26

NO: 0

ABS: 1

Accepted

VOTE 49

WE WANT THIS TOPIC TO BE TREATED BY ORDINARY PROCEDURE.

YES: 10

NO: 15

ABS: 1

Rejected

VOTE 50

WE WISH THIS TOPIC TO BE TREATED BY EXTRAORDINARY PROCEDURE

YES: 22

NO: 3

ABS: 2

Accepted

Nominations were then taken for members of this ad hoc commission.

Dom Timothy, Generalate

Dom Bernardus, Tilburg

Dom Joseph, MSB

M. Rosaria, Vitorchiano

M. Genevieve-Marie, Echourgnac

Dom Patrick, Sept-Fons

M. Cecilia, Tenshien

Dom Jean-Marc, Bellefontaine

Dom Nathanaël, Westmalle

Dom Enrique, San Isidro

M. Marion, Crozet

M. Daniele, Generalate

We will first elect the member of the A.G.'s council:

Dom Timothy, Generalate 20 **elected**

M. Daniele, Generalate 5

We will vote for an abbess:

M. Rosaria, Vitorchiano 19 **elected**

M. Genevieve-Marie, Echourgnac 0

M. Cecilia, Tenshien 7

M. Marion, Crozet 1

We will now vote for a father immediate

Dom Bernardus 23 **elected**

Dom Joseph 2

Dom Nathanaël 2

Dom Patrick 1

We will vote for a 2nd father immediate**Dom Patrick** 14 **elected**We will vote for a 3rd father immediate**Dom Isidoro** 19 **elected**

4.1.2 Central Commissions

The region of the Isles asked that the MGM deal with the composition of the Central Commissions.

Vote 67 of the MGM 2008:

WE WANT EACH REGION TO BE REPRESENTED ON THE CENTRAL COMMISSION BY A SINGLE DELEGATE – A MONK OR NUN – EXCEPT RAFMA, ORIENS AND REMILA, WHO WOULD HAVE TWO DELEGATES EACH.

GCf	YES	59	NO	9	ABS	5	Proposition Accepted
GCm	YES	64	NO	23	ABS	3	Proposition Accepted

That vote was taken in the prospect of a single general chapter. The matter was raised because the number of participants in the Central Commissions' meeting was too large. However, an equal representation of monks and nuns was desired.

In many regions, the representative to the Central Commissions is not necessary president of the region.

The most logical solution would be to have one representative per region. However, the regions with the greatest number of monasteries are also the most diverse (ORIENS, RAFMA) in terms of culture and language.

No progress has been made on this question. It did not seem necessary to add it to the programme of the MGM.

VOTE 51

WE WISH THE REVISION OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE CENTRAL COMMISSIONS TO BE PUT ON THE PROGRAMME OF THE MGM 2011.

YES: 6 NO: 16 ABS: 5 Rejected

4.1.3 Revision of the Statute on Foundations

This subject was first brought up by RAFMA, and was meant to address the situation of individual brothers or sisters who take advantage of an indult of exclaustation or leave of absence to attempt to found a new community. These so-called foundations often enjoy some support from the local Church, and often identify themselves as Trappist even though they have no right to do so. This can create confusion among the local faithful and great difficulties for the superior and home community of the brother or sister in question. And since this situation is by no means limited to Africa/Madagascar, it was addressed by the Central Commissions.

During the discussion that followed, it was noted that the present requirements to make a foundation were only a minimum, and perhaps insufficient. In general, successful foundations seem to be made with personnel and resources significantly greater than the minimum required in the statute. Therefore, in order to ensure the best possible start for a new community, from its foundation until its full autonomy, it was decided to review the requirements of the statute at the next MGM.

VOTE 52

WE DESIRE TO REVIEW IN THE STATUTE ON FOUNDATIONS, THE REQUIREMENTS FOR FOUNDING A COMMUNITY IN ORDER TO ENSURE A STABLE FOUNDATION.

YES: 27 NO: 0 ABS: 0 Accepted Unanimous

VOTE 53

WE WISH TO HAVE A WORKING PAPER TO REVIEW, IN THE STATUTE ON FOUNDATIONS, THE REQUIREMENTS FOR FOUNDING A COMMUNITY OR RECEIVING AN EXISTING COMMUNITY INTO THE ORDER IN SUCH A WAY AS TO ENSURE A STABLE FOUNDATION AND ITS PROGRESS THROUGH THE STAGES TO FULL AUTONOMY.

YES: 27 NO: 0 ABS: 0 Accepted Unanimous

It was decided to have two working papers prepared: one historical and one legal. The legal paper will be prepared by the law commission. Nominations were made for the person to prepare the historical paper, followed by an election.

Dom Armand, Scourmont	10	elected
M. Daniele, Generalate	0	
Dom Isidoro, Huerta	6	
Dom Patrick, Sept-Fons	4	
M. Rosaria, Vitorchiano	4	
M. Monica, Valsarena	2	

4.1.4 Juridical Link between a House of Nuns and its Foundation

Three regions mentioned this and voted on the matter, asking that a juridical link between a monastery of nuns and its foundation be established at least as long as the foundation remains a simple priory and that, during this period, the superior of the founding house be involved in the regular visitations.

A working paper had been prepared for the MGM 2008.

The subject was discussed in one mixed commission of the MGM 2008, but it was never discussed in plenary session.

During a brief exchange, the question of mothers immediate was mentioned because the matter had been raised at the RE regional meeting, and was inspired by the example of the Congregation of Saint Bernard, where regular visitations are made by superiors of the Congregation.

The following votes were taken:

VOTE 54

WE DESIRE TO PUT THE TOPIC "JURIDICAL LINK BETWEEN A HOUSE OF NUNS AND ITS FOUNDATION" ON THE PROGRAMME OF THE MGM 2011.

YES: 27 NO: 0 ABS: 0 Accepted Unanimous

VOTE 55

WE WANT THE TOPIC "JURIDICAL LINKS BETWEEN A HOUSE OF NUNS AND ITS FOUNDATION" TO BE TREATED BY ORDINARY PROCEDURE.

YES: 24 NO: 1 ABS: 2 Accepted

[The vote on extraordinary procedure is unnecessary]

4.2 Passive Voice in the Election of the Abbot General

Before the election of the abbot general by the general chapters of 2008, the following votes were taken:

VOTE 4

WE DESIRE THAT C. 83.1 BE INTERPRETED IN THE LIGHT OF C. 34.2, NAMELY, THAT ANYONE WHO IS OR HAS BEEN AN ABBOT OR TITULAR PRIOR OR SUPERIOR AD NUTUM IN THE ORDER IS ELIGIBLE TO BE ELECTED ABBOT GENERAL.

GCf	YES	21	NO	49	ABS	2	Proposition rejected
GCm	YES	33	NO	56	ABS	0	Proposition rejected

VOTE 5

WE DESIRE THAT C. 83.1 BE INTERPRETED IN THE LIGHT OF C 34.2 WITH THE EXCLUSION OF SUPERIORS AD NUTUM, NAMELY, THAT WHOEVER IS OR HAS BEEN ABBOT OR TITULAR PRIOR IN THE ORDER BE ELIGIBLE FOR ELECTION AS ABBOT GENERAL.

GCf	YES:	39	NO:	25	ABS:	2	Proposition accepted
GCm	YES:	54	NO:	36	ABS:	2	Proposition accepted

In 2008 we “interpreted” these two constitutions. We must now request the authorisation of the Holy See and before doing so, study this question pour the next chapters.

VOTE 56

WE WISH TO PUT THE REVISION OF C.83.1 ON THE PROGRAMME OF THE MGM 2011.

YES:	25	NO:	0	ABS:	2	Accepted
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VOTE 57

WE DESIRE THE LAW COMMISSION TO DRAW UP A WORKING PAPER ON A REVISED TEXT OF C.83.1.

YES:	26	NO:	0	ABS:	1	Accepted
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VOTE 58

WE WISH C.83.1 TO BE TREATED BY SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURE.

YES:	22	NO:	1	ABS:	4	Accepted
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[votes on ordinary and extraordinary procedure were not required]

4.3 Suppression of a Monastery: C 67

Two regions felt there was a need to study Constitution 67 on the suppression of a monastery during the next MGM. Although the subject arose because of a particular situation, during the discussion other examples were given. Among other requirements, a 2/3-majority vote of the conventual chapter is necessary in order to suppress an autonomous monastery. It was noted that very elderly communities often found it difficult to make the difficult decisions necessary to deal with their situation. This can make it very difficult for the father immediate or a commission of aid to accompany them.

In some cases the solution was to become an annex house of another community, which would assume responsibility for it. It is important that communities be offered as many choices as possible. The Spanish Region, together with the Congregation of St. Bernard, have a project for an assisted-living residence for members of houses that are to be suppressed. The delicate problem of material goods must also be treated with prudence.

It was also noted that these situations are delicate and unique, so that each one needs to be dealt with individually and with great care. Furthermore, the independence of each community and its right to determine its future must be respected. Nevertheless, since the number of monasteries with a very elderly population is expected to increase quickly over the next few years, it was decided to add the study of this constitution to the programme of the next MGM.

Constitution 67

VOTE 59

WE WISH TO PUT THE STUDY OF CTS 67 (ON THE SUPPRESSION OF A MONASTERY) ON THE PROGRAMME OF THE NEXT MGM.

YES: 27 NO: 0 AB: 0 Accepted Unanimous

VOTE 60

WE ASK THE LAW COMMISSION TO PREPARE A WORKING PAPER.

YES: 25 NO: 0 ABS: 2 Accepted

VOTE 61

THIS TOPIC WILL BE TREATED BY:
SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURE

YES: 0

VOTE 60

ORDINARY PROCEDURE

YES: 1

VOTE 61

EXTRAORDINARY PROCEDURE

YES: 25 Accepted

4.4 Commissions of Aid

The question of commissions of aid was raised in several regional meetings. The following questions came up:

- Should they remain primarily pastoral or should they be given a juridical status?
- Should their way of working be defined?
- What link should they have with the father immediate?

During a lengthy discussion the following points were raised:

- Communities in difficulty are sometimes most in need of encouragement, and of knowing what is done elsewhere.
- Each commission of aid should be able to compose out its own statutes.
- The general chapters can give directions (not a statute) or guidelines. They must be given a certain leeway of action.
- A commission of aid may be required to help a community improve the management of its economy.
- The father immediate should agree to, or at least be aware of, the measures taken by the commission even if he is not a member and if the commission was set up on someone else's initiative.
- Not everyone agreed that the local superior should determine the length of the commission's mandate. Who then should do this?
- It would be helpful to have a report on different experiences of mutual aid in the order.
- There are times when an abbot may not want a commission of aid, but it may be necessary to preserve a link with the order.
- One must respect a community's fragility. Decisions cannot be imposed. The goal is always to help a community to live.

VOTE 62

WE DESIRE TO HAVE THE TOPIC OF THE COMMISSIONS OF AID ON THE PROGRAMME OF THE MGM 2011.

YES: 19 NO: 3 ABS: 5 Accepted

VOTE 63

WE DESIRE TO HAVE LEGISLATION ON THE COMMISSIONS OF AID.

YES: 0 NO: 27 ABS: 0 Rejected

VOTE 64

WE DESIRE TO HAVE GUIDELINES FOR THE COMMISSIONS OF AID.

YES: 9 NO: 16 ABS: 2 Rejected

VOTE 65

WE WISH THAT AT THE NEXT MGM IS PRESENTED A REPORT ON THE DIFFERENT EXPERIECES OF MUTUAL AID IN THE ORDER

YES: 21 NO: 2 ABS:4 Accepted

WE WISH THAT THIS PAPER WILL BE MADE BY:

- Dom Timothy
- Dom Manu
- M. Danièle
- M. Marie-Christine
- **Dom Manu and M. Marie-Christine elected**

4.5 Shared Authority

The theme of shared authority was introduced by the ORIENS region. Dom Filomeno explained that the concept was linked to the structures of the order, particularly the father immediate in the context of his relationship and other instances of authority, for example commissions of aid, mixed commissions etc. Dom Filomeno suggested that the source of redundancy might be an inadequate understanding of the spirituality of shared authority in the Cistercian tradition, particularly as expressed in the Charter of Charity.

The discussion that followed revealed a great deal of interest, and it was decided to include an exchange on the subject in the next MGM.

VOTE 66

WE REQUEST THE ORIENS REGION TO INTRODUCE AND ORIENTATE A REFLECTION AND EXCHANGE BY THE MGM ON THE THEME OF A SPIRITUALITY OF SHARED AUTHORITY IN THE ORDER.

YES: 23 NO: 0 ABS: 4 Accepted

VOTE 67A

THIS SHARING WILL BE DONE IN THE AULA.

YES: 21 NO: 3 ABS: 3 Accepted

VOTE 67B

THIS SHARING WILL BE DONE BY ALL THE MIXED COMMISSIONS.

N/A

4.6 Central Secretary for Formation

At the meeting of the Central Commissions at Orval in 1995, it was specified that the mandate of the central secretary for formation is three years, and can be renewed. The secretary is elected by the Central Commissions. No. 70 of the Ratio Institutionis gives a brief description of the secretary's duties: "The Central Secretary's function is to facilitate communication between the Regions and to ensure the dissemination of relevant information about all aspects of monastic formation."

The current secretary, Sr. Pamela Clinton of Wrentham, presented a paper at the meeting. This gave the central commissions the opportunity to ask her about her experience as central secretary for formation. Sr. Pamela said that her responsibilities were not very clearly defined. She was unsure of what the superiors expected of her, and found the lack of direction inhibiting. Regarding the function of disseminating information, with the internet today, she didn't think that it was necessary to have assign a person to the task. She thought the central secretary could contribute to formation in the order by reading broadly and bringing up pertinent topics for reflection. She felt supported by the superiors, but remained unclear as to what the order expected of her.

M. Marie-Pascale had also fulfilled this role, and she was kind enough to share her experience. For her, there were two main aspects to the job: the wide, ill-defined mandate described in the Ratio, and a specific task she was assigned – the organization of the Institute of Cistercian Patrimony. She also made an enquiry into the difficulties experienced by young solemn professed. During her six years as central secretary for formation, the most valuable and rewarding work was the close contact she maintained with the regional secretaries, particularly the francophone ones.

During the discussions that preceded the election, the following points were made. The secretary's most immediate task will be the synthesis of all the material the regions have prepared on formation (Vote 30 bis). It was suggested that the central secretary could investigate the needs for formation in the order and propose improvements and solutions. The role of the internet in disseminating information was emphasised, as well as the necessity to coordinate the translation of texts. Some knowledge of the official languages of the order is important.

The job description given in no. 70 of the Ratio was thought by some to be inadequate, but there was no desire to modify the text. Nevertheless, the central commissions' thoughts and suggestions should be communicated to the secretary to guide the secretary in his/her duties.

The election followed.

Sr. Katharina, Nazareth	17 elected
Sr. Pamela, Wrentham	7
Fr. Michael Casey	0
Sr. Maria Francesca, Valserena	0
Fr. Francisco Rafael, Viaceli	2
Dom Guillaume, MDC	1

4.7 Central Secretary for Liturgy

During the meeting of the USA region, the question of the order's central secretary for liturgy arose. Dom Marie-Gerard of la Trappe has been providing this service with great expertise since 1977. The length of his mandate had never been fixed. In a letter, part of which M. Daniele read to the Central Commissions, Dom Marie-Gerard suggested that it was time to appoint a successor but that he was, of course, still willing to serve if required to do so.

In his letter Dom Marie-Gerard mentioned that since the publication of the Cistercian Ritual, the main task of the central secretary has consisted of producing the Ordo every year. While never onerous, it has become even less so since a monk of Genesee put all the necessary information into an electronic format.

A strong desire was expressed to maintain the position. A reference person to whom one could refer liturgical questions is still considered necessary. One member of the assembly noted that as more and more houses of nuns had non-monastic chaplains, liturgical questions were bound to multiply, and it would be helpful if someone could provide definitive answers to specific questions. The central secretary could also be a useful resource for the abbot general and his council.

In the absence of a commission, it was suggested that consultants could be designated in the various regions to respond to local needs. The necessity of forming liturgists was noted. It was also mentioned that it would be useful to have a liturgical compendium for our Order.

VOTE 68

WE WISH TO HAVE A CENTRAL SECRETARY FOR LITURGY.

YES: 27 NO: 0 ABS: 0 Accepted Unanimous

VOTE 69

WE WISH TO HAVE LITURGICAL CONSULTANTS

YES: 22 NO: 1 ABS: 4 Accepted

VOTE 70

WE CONFIDE TO THE REGIONS THE CHOICE OF THESE CONSULTANTS, ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE GROUPS.

YES: 25 NO: 0 ABS: 2 Accepted

Nomination of Candidates for the Central Secretary for Liturgy and election.

Fr. Justin, Genesee	18	elected
Fr. Gerardo, San Isidro	8	
Dom Olivier, Citeaux	1	

VOTE 71

WE RECOMMEND THE REGIONS FORM EXPERTS IN LITURGY.

YES: 14 NO: 2 ABS: 11 **Accepted**

4.8 Confirmation of the Acts of the General Chapters and the MGM

The RE asked that at each General Chapter, we continue the practice of confirming the acts of the General Chapters and the MGM, as a simple acknowledgment of what had taken place. This requires a study by the law commission and the question should be added to the programme for 2011, according to the vote of both Chapters in 2008:

VOTE 54

WE PUT ON THE PROGRAMME OF THE NEXT GENERAL CHAPTERS AND OF THE MGM THE STUDY OF THE NEED OF A CONFIRMATION OF THE ACTS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTERS AND THE MGM.

GCm	YES	78	NO	14	ABS	4	Proposition accepted
GCf	YES	58	NO	5	ABS	9	Proposition accepted

VOTE 72

WE DESIRE A WORKING DOCUMENT DRAWN UP BY THE LAW COMMISSION ON THE NECESSITY OF CONFIRMING THE ACTS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTERS AND THE MGM.

YES: 26 NO: 0 ABS: 1 Accepted

VOTE 73

WE DESIRE THIS TOPIC TO BE TREATED AT THE MGM 2011 BY SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURE.

YES: 26 NO: 0 ABS: 1 Accepted

4.9 Lay Cistercians

By votes 71 and 72 of the MGM 2008, the order recognized the existence of a lay expression of our Cistercian charism and that the document "Lay Cistercian Identity" be studied by the regions, to determine what we can take on as an order.

VOTE 71

WE RECOGNIZE THE EXISTENCE OF A LAY EXPRESSION OF OUR CISTERCIAN CHARISM IN THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THE GROUPS OF LAY PERSONS ASSOCIATED WITH A NUMBER OF THE MONASTERIES OF OUR ORDER.

MGM YES: 132 NO: 21 ABS: 10 **Proposition accepted**

VOTE 72

WE WANT THE DOCUMENT, "LAY CISTERCIAN IDENTITY", TO BE STUDIED IN THE REGIONS SO AS TO SEE WHAT WE AS AN ORDER CAN ASSUME.

MGM YES: 115 NO: 35 ABS: 12 **Proposition accepted**

Every regional conference (except one) dealt with the subject. Almost all participants took part in the exchange to see if this item should be put onto the programme of the MGM 2011. The main points made follow.

- The order should not take charge of groups of lay Cistercians, nor give them official recognition. They should rather associate themselves with a particular monastery.
- The order is the guardian of Cistercian identity.
- One must make a clear distinction between monastic life and the life led by lay Cistercians.
- One can only speak of lay Cistercians if a group is linked to a particular monastery. That can begin with a link to one person (monk/nun or abbot/abbess), but this must lead to a link with the community, which will make a discernment and vote on their link with the lay group. Similarly, a monk/nun is only a member of the order in virtue of his/her profession in a specific community.
- In certain communities the lay Cistercians feel a personal connection with the community – this has always existed. But now it is a matter of laypeople desiring to integrate community life into their own life, in relation to a monastic community. The CNE region suggested a few criteria (relation to the community explicitly recognised by the abbot/abbess; consent of the pastoral council; consent of the conventual chapter).
- At present there are 70 groups with a total of 2,000 persons. About half the communities of the order are involved.
- Up till now we have only reacted to input from the Lay Cistercians. It seems to be the time to reflect on our own position, by means of a dialogue within the order.

VOTE 74

WE WISH TO PLACE THE TOPIC OF LAY CISTERCIANS ON THE PROGRAMME OF THE MGM 2011.

YES: 28 NO: 4 ABS: 5 Accepted

VOTE 75

WE ASK DOM ARMAND TO PREPARE A WORKING PAPER ON THE WORK DONE BY THE REGIONS (cf. MGM 2008, vote 72, minutes p. 285).

YES: 26 NO: 0 ABS: 1 Accepted

VOTE 76

THIS TOPIC WILL BE TREATED BY:
SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURE

YES: 4

ORDINARY PROCEDURE

YES: 21 Accepted

EXTRAORDINARY PROCEDURE

YES: 2

5. ORGANISATION OF THE MGM

5.1 Coordination Commission

5.1.1 Resignation of M. Marie-Pascale of Brialmont

At the beginning of this meeting of the Central Commissions, M. Marie-Pascale offered her resignation from the Coordinating Commission:

“When I was elected to the coordinating commission at the end of the MGM 2008, I accepted because of the real need to have a francophone on the commission.

“But in spite of the extremely interesting exchanges and preparatory work, despite the kindness of the five other members, I decided last Saturday that it would be more honest to admit that I must resign this function. I really cannot grasp sufficiently the content of the exchanges during the sessions here, and at the MGM, to be an effective moderator. Furthermore, I can no longer handle this amount of stress, especially when it continues for three weeks!

“I therefore present my resignation as member of the coordinating commission. If I can be of any help to the commission this week, I will be happy to oblige.

Thank you.”

5.1.2 Persons to Help New Capitulants

Superiors attending the General Chapters and the MGM for the first time need help understanding how these meetings function. Members of the Coordinating Commission could arrange brief seminars at the beginning of the MGM, for the different language groups.

It is also important that each mixed commission elect experienced people to fulfil the roles of president and secretary.

5.1.3 The Liaison Commission

In 2008, Dom Timothy (along with 2 other capitulants) was elected to the liaison commission, which was meant to serve as a link between the mixed commissions and the coordinating commission. He explained that this was not easy to accomplish and perhaps not necessary. This could be done by the secretary of the coordination commission as is indicated in nos. 2.4 – 2.8 in the document “House Reports and their Treatment”.

5.1.4 Secretary of the Coordinating Commission

Sr. Madeleine of Echourgnac was appointed by the Central Commissions to fulfil this role at the MGM 2011.

5.2 Liturgy

Several regions voted on this question to request:

- that the opening liturgy for the MGM be well prepared;
- that the use of Latin be retained for certain parts of the liturgy, as was done in 2008;
- that the Eucharist, Lauds and Vigils be celebrated in the Basilica, if possible (to reduce costs);
- that the language in which the Eucharist is celebrated be chosen by the region designated to prepare the celebration;
- that it be possible to adapt the Eucharistic celebration to different cultures;
- that Vespers be celebrated in the same manner as Lauds, that is, all together, alternating languages;
- that the Roman office be followed for Lauds and Vespers;
- that the Salve be chanted in the aula at the end of the afternoon session.

During the brief discussion that followed, other points were raised:

- in the RE, despite a vote that was not presently clearly equivocal, the majority would prefer to celebrate the Eucharist in the vernacular;
- several regions prefer that Vespers be celebrated in linguistic groups;
- the lively African liturgy is much appreciated;
- one person suggested celebrating Lauds and Vespers in the Basilica with the Franciscans, in Italian.

Names were suggested for a master of ceremonies. This person could also fulfil another function at the MGM.

Nomination of Candidates for Master of Ceremonies at the MGM 2011 and election.

Fr. Germain, Koutaba	7	
Fr. Loris, Frattocchie	20	elected

VOTE 77

WE WOULD LIKE LATIN TO BE USED FOR THE ORDINARY AND THE COMMON OF THE MASS INsofar AS POSSIBLE.

YES: 22 NO: 2 ABS: 3 Accepted

VOTE 78

WE WISH TO CELEBRATE VESPERS IN THE SAME MANNER AS LAUDS, SHOULD THE CHURCH BE AVAILABLE.

YES: 7 NO: 14 ABS: 3 Rejected

VOTE 79

WE WISH THE SALVE TO BE SUNG AT THE END OF VESPERS.

YES: 20 NO: 1 ABS: 5 Accepted

First Day of the MGM

VOTE 80

WE WISH TO HAVE THE AFTERNOON AVAILABLE FOR PRAYER AND QUIET AS A PREPARATION FOR THE WORK OF THE MGM.

YES: 16 NO: 4 ABS: 7 Accepted

5.3 Guests

The members of the central commissions suggested the names of people who could be invited to the MGM 2011:

- Dom Ambrose
- The central secretary for formation for a few days

For one day:

- The newly elected abbot general of the Order of Citeaux
- The abbot primate of the Benedictines
- The prioress general of the Bernardines of Esquermes
- The prioress general of the Bernardines of Oudenaarde
- The president or a representative of the AIM

A certain latitude must be given to the abbot general and his council to make arrangements according to the replies given to the invitations. It was suggested they all be invited the same day without asking them to address the assembly, which would overload the programme, and that they be invited to lunch with the abbot general and a few capitulants.

5.4 Papal Audience

It seems that the pope does not receive groups in private audience (the Benedictines were received), but the request must be made well in advance. Because of this, the prospect of travelling from Assisi to Rome for a public audience did not inspire much interest. Only the RAFMA and ORIENS regions were interested in this option.

5.5 Personnel for the MGM

Names were suggested to provide various services during the MGM 2011: coordinator of the secretariate, one secretary and one typist for each official language (a chief secretary was not deemed necessary), interpreters, translators for texts, some of whom would have to remain after the end of the MGM.

It would also be possible to appoint translators who could work from their monasteries and send their translations by email.

An infirmarian is also needed.

Each region will suggest names to the abbot general's council. Detailed job descriptions and a list of the necessary skills can be provided.

II. PLENARY COUNCIL OF THE ABBOT GENERAL

According to ST 80.J: "When in session the Central Commission of Abbots acts as the plenary council of the Abbot General, who consults it in the cases mentioned in ST 84.1.C. . ." During this meeting of the Central Commissions, the abbot general consulted his plenary council on four matters.

1. Valserena's Pre-Foundation in Syria

The first and most important of these was the matter of Valserena's pre-foundation in Syria. M. Anne-Emmanuelle of Blauvac had just returned from a visit to Syria, and presented a report on the situation of the community, sent by M. Marta, superior of the pre-foundation. A brief resume of that report follows.

There are presently five sisters living in the pre-foundation cell in Syria. They reside in Aleppo while awaiting completion of the first phase of the construction project. A sixth foundress, Sr. Geertui of Klaarland, is expected Sept. 8 of this year.

Candidates are already showing interest in the community, and two are in the noviciate of Valserena. One is a Lebanese Maronite who is currently making her noviciate for Valserena. The other, a Syrian Greek Catholic who has been in contact with the group for two years, is discerning her vocation as a postulant. The sisters are also expecting two other candidates for a monastic experience: one French and the other Argentinian. They are both discerning a call to monastic life in Syria.

They already have a chaplain, Fr. Jean-Claude Maingot of Kokoubou, originally from Bellefontaine. He is staying with the Franciscans in Aleppo while the monastery is under construction.

The first phase of construction, which includes quarters for the sisters, a few rooms for guests and a watchman's house, which will be used for the chaplain at this stage. The sisters hope to move into the new buildings in July. Up to then, their principal employment has been the study of Arabic and the supervision of the construction.

The assembly was greatly impressed by this project, particularly by the unity the sisters have managed to build among themselves and the strong support they enjoy from Valserena, Tre Fontane, as well as the local Churches. The overwhelming desire was to support and encourage this project. Nevertheless, the information given and the consequent discussions led the abbot general, after private consultation, to decide not to seek the consent of his plenary council to approve the foundation at this time.

While there is no doubt about the favourable opinion of the assembly, it was felt that it would be better for all concerned to have the foundation approved at the next General Chapter. In this way, the foundation would have the approval and support of the whole Order, which would give the project the best start possible. Furthermore, a year's wait would give time for the sisters to live together in a properly monastic setting – they have been living in two apartments in Aleppo provided by the bishop. This would also give time for Sr. Geertrui to live with the other sisters and become a full member of the community. It was felt that an extra year could only benefit this project.

2. Bela Vista

As Apostolic Administrator, Dom Bernardo Bonowitz of Novo Mundo reported on the situation of Bela Vista, as well as giving a history of his involvement with that community.

3. Marija Zvijezda

Dom Eamon reported on meetings he had recently at the Holy See, regarding the situation at Marija Zvijezda

4. German Speaking houses of the Order

The situation of the German speaking houses of the Order was also discussed. A great deal of sympathy was manifested for their relative isolation and lack of resources. A desire and willingness to help them find solutions to their difficulties was expressed.

III. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Former Superiors

Two regions (NED and CAN) requested pastoral guidelines for former superiors, because former superiors often experience difficulty finding their place in community.

- There are presently 112 former abbots and 63 former abbesses living in the order.
- “At the end of their mandate, it was noted that most abbots and abbesses are left to themselves, without any framework or resources at their disposal. Several examples were given of superiors who had suffered greatly after the end of their service, which is understandable. When the superior has been the centre of fraternal relations and even the material organisation of the monastery for 10, 20 or even 40 years, it can be difficult to allow another to assume the role, especially when the new superior sets a different course from the one taken by his/her predecessor. In this case it is preferable, or even desirable, for both the new superior and the community that the former superior spend some time away from the monastery. In the current state of affairs, one can neither require nor even request a former abbot or abbess to take some time away in order to permit the new superior to assume his/her new responsibilities. It is nevertheless true that certain former superiors have done so of their own accord, but they are not the majority.”
- “As one region of the order has already suggested, we believe that pastoral guidelines for former abbots and abbesses would help the superiors and communities concerned. Without prescribing a certain length of time, the proposed guidelines should at least offer the possibility of taking a temporary leave of absence from the monastery, as a time of spiritual renewal. In other words, we would simply like to specify their rights and duties; their needs are as legitimate as those of the other brothers and sisters of the community. We think the central commissions should establish how these guidelines are to be formulated (establish a commission, preparation of document, etc.)”. (cf. CAN 2010, p. 11)
- It is important to identify the main problem and the common factors: overly long abbacy; difference between limited and unlimited mandates; a superior’s personal problems; our understanding of the role of the abbot/abbess.
- Each case is unique. Some former abbots/abbesses are able to live peacefully in their communities.
- The new abbot/abbess has to take on a pastoral role in relation to his/her predecessor and must help him/her find a new place in the community.
- Sometimes there are community problems. Monks/nuns who are having difficulty with their new superior can seek refuge and reassurance with their former abbot/abbess.
- This is a very important question and a real pastoral conundrum for the new superior. It would be a good topic for reflection in regional meetings.

VOTE 81

WE WISH THE SUBJECT OF RETIRED SUPERIORS TO BE TREATED BY THE REGIONAL CONFERENCES.

YES: 23 NO: 2 ABS: 2 Accepted

VOTE 82

WE WISH TO PUT THE SUBJECT OF RETIRED SUPERIORS ON THE PROGRAMME OF THE MGM 2011.

YES: 7 NO: 15 ABS: 4 Rejected

2. Evaluation

First of all, the members of the central commissions unanimously expressed their heartfelt thanks to Dom Bernardus and the community for hosting the meeting. They spared no pains in making us feel at home and helping to ensure that the meeting ran smoothly. Especially appreciated was their adaptation of the monastic liturgy to include the various languages and cultures present.

Thanks also to the sisters of Arnhem for their warm hospitality during a visit to their new monastery.

The members of the central commissions are also grateful to the secretaries, interpreters and technical people who worked behind the scenes. A special thanks to our indefatigable technician, who made sure all the technology functioned without a hitch.

Everyone appreciated the atmosphere of the meeting. Discussions were calm and respectful, even when dealing with difficult subjects. A spirit of unity, mutual respect and listening (one member appreciated the effort at “intercultural listening”) reigned. People of different languages and cultures, and especially new members of the commissions, all felt free to participate. The honesty and attentiveness which characterised the dialogues was also appreciated. Several people mentioned the excellent work of the coordinating commission and of the moderators: thanks to them the meeting ran smoothly. As proof of their efficiency, the abbot general pointed out that the meeting finished ahead of schedule.

The abbot general closed the meeting by reiterating his thanks to everyone, reserving a special mention to M. Daniele for her help in preparing the meeting. With that, he officially closed the 2010 meeting of the Central Commissions at Tilburg.

IV. APPENDICES

1. HOUSE REPORTS AND THEIR TREATMENT AT THE MGM 2011

A - Writing the House Reports

1.1 - The aim of the House Reports is to share with the whole Order the real state of the community. It is written by the community with its Superior in consultation with the Father Immediate. It is limited to a full page of text.

1.2 - In writing it, the community reflects on its own monastic experience, especially as regards formation, dealing with this question in a concrete manner, avoiding abstract considerations. The community can take its inspiration from the document that will be proposed, and may use the recent Visitation Card.

B – Treatment of the House Reports at the Mixed General Meeting.

2.1 - The study of the House Reports is the main aspect of the collegial pastoral solicitude of the General Chapters towards the communities of the Order. The two General Chapters exercise that solicitude by confiding the reading and study of these House Reports to the Mixed Commissions of the MGM.

2.1.1 - After having read and discussed the Reports, the Commission dialogues with the Superior. The Father Immediate, who always has the right to provide pertinent information to the President of the Mixed Commission that is reading the report of his daughter house, is consulted (which does not necessarily imply that he participate in the discussions). If more information is needed, the Commission contacts other members of the MGM who are familiar with the case in question. In both cases, the consultation may be carried out either in the presence or the absence of the Superior of the house, according to circumstances.

2.1.2 - Care should be taken at every stage, to respect the legitimate sensitivity of the superior of the house studied and of everyone concerned. If some sensitive information needs to be given to allow for an enlightened pastoral intervention, all the participants must be aware of their duty to respect charity and confidentiality.

[At the beginning of the MGM, after their election, the presidents, vice-presidents and secretaries of the Mixed Commissions will have a meeting with a member of the Coordinating Commission in order to receive some indications on how to fulfil their tasks.]

a) Study of the House Reports by the Mixed Commissions of the MGM

2.2 – Each Mixed Commission studies all the reports assigned to it.

2.2.1 - In that study, they will be sensitive for example to :

- The quality of formation in every phase of monastic life.
- The effective balance between *lectio*, liturgy and work.
- The Superior's pastoral care of the community. For example, the care of the aged and infirm members or of those in initial formation.

- How the community is facing certain challenges, such as that of inculturation, especially in the field of formation.
- The available means used by the superior to assure his or her own ongoing formation inner balance and growth.
- The relationship with the Father Immediate.
- In cases where an abbot has a large filiation, how he deals with this.

2.2.2 - The pastoral care for the communities studied and their superiors will normally be exercised through: advice, affirmation, encouragement, recommendations and brotherly/sisterly support. The Mixed Commissions may also choose to send a message to the community concerned.

2.2.3 - When making a decision concerning a community, the Mixed Commission will always discuss it with the superior concerned and will consult the Father Immediate.

2.2.4 - In exercising pastoral care of the community and its Superior, the Mixed Commission may take a **decision** and require its implementation **in virtue of the authority delegated to it by both General Chapters**, except when there is question of rights reserved to the General Chapters [cf. C 79]. The Mixed Commission should state clearly in writing the nature of the decision and its limits.

2.2.5 – In the cases when a decision must be imposed, a majority vote of the members of the Mixed Commission is required.

2.2.6 – It is possible for a Superior to have recourse to the Plenary Assembly concerning a decision made by a Mixed Commission in his own regard or that of his community. He will do so through the Coordinating Commission. For that recourse to be possible, the Mixed Commissions will not wait till the last days of the MGM to make their decisions.

2.2.7 - All the decisions are communicated to the Plenary Assembly in the manner that the Coordinating Commission will judge opportune.

2.2.8 - Each Mixed Commission makes a report offering a general picture of the communities it has studied. In this report mention can be made of particular aspects or common features which could be of interest to the whole Order, especially in the area of formation.

b) Situations requiring a special pastoral attention

2.3.1 - There may be situations that invite further pastoral care due to the fact that:

- the pastoral care of the Mixed Commission is not accepted by the persons involved;
- more time and special interventions are needed in complicated situations.

2.3.2 - In such cases, the Mixed Commission will ask the Coordinating Commission to create an *ad hoc* commission that will be composed of persons chosen for their experience and their capacity to intervene in that particular situation. Before establishing that Commission *ad hoc*, the Coordinating Commission will consult each time the Abbot General and his Council. The findings of that *ad hoc* commission will be brought to the Mixed Commission that will then make the necessary recommendations and eventually take the necessary decisions.

2.3.3 – The following up of the decisions taken by a Mixed Commission will normally be made by the Father Immediate; if this is not opportune, the Mixed Commission will determine who will be responsible for the following up.

c) The Communication of Information

2.4 – The secretaries of the Mixed Commissions will regularly give to the secretary of the Coordinating Commission a report on the progress of their work on the House Reports.

2.5 – A member of the Council of the Abbot General will serve as liaison between the Abbot General and the Coordinating Commission

2.6 – The reports of the Mixed Commissions, at the end of their work, will be communicated to the Plenary Assembly in the form judged most opportune by the Coordinating Commission.

2.7 - The secretaries of the Mixed Commissions having finished their work of the MGM will give to the Coordinating Commission all the documentation that has been worked on in the Mixed Commissions.

2.8 – At the end of the MGM, the secretary of the Coordinating Commission will give to the Abbot General a complete documentation concerning the work of the MGM and of the two General Chapters.

d) State of the Order

3. – A document on the state of the Order will be written after the MGM, the reaction of which will be entrusted to the Abbot General, his Council and two members of the General Chapters (an abbot and an abbess), elected by the MGM at the beginning of its work.

3.1 – This document will be mostly a synthesis of the study of the house reports and a synthesis of the subjects and principal aspects which have emerged during the MGM.

2. Report of the Central Secretary of Formation (Sr. Pamela, Wrentham)

OPENING REMARKS

Thank you for the invitation to report and for the warm welcome.

My remarks are divided into two sections:

1. Brief comments on the recommendations made to the Central Secretary at MGM 2008.
2. An introduction to research on two areas related to formation that I have been doing. This section will be longer.

From the MGM 2008

We encourage the Central Secretary of Formation

- *to continue to develop the website for formation in our Order as an instrument of communication for formators.*
[I began work on this and tried to invite others to collaborate. Progress was slow, and then discontinued when the initiative for a new website was begun. I have collaborated with Sr. Kathleen on this development and once the new site is "live" will focus on the formation section there. I had organized a site according to Regions; it was suggested this was not the best, but rather organization according to languages would be more helpful. This is what Sr. Kathleen and I discussed. I hope that when the new site is up, I can further the efforts for collaboration by means of the web.]
- *to continue her efforts to prepare a 'workbook' accompanying the Ratio containing texts that are particularly helpful for superiors and formators (B. Olivera, M. Casey, C. Piccardo and possibly others)*
[I am working on this project and will be able to have materials before MGM 2010. What this is to include is dependent on another recommendation of MGM 2008 made to the regions-- *We encourage each region to draw up a text expressing their specific needs and priorities in the area of formation which could be included in the 'workbook' accompanying the Ratio. (Cf. Letter of the Regional Secretaries, paragraph 2.)*
- *to coordinate the translation of texts on formation* [I have not done any work on this recommendation.]
- *to compile a bibliography of basic books for formators*
[I am working on this in conjunction with the recommendation for materials for the formation handbook.]

INTRODUCTION

At the 2007 meeting of the Central Commissions I suggested, "that issues that are very important for formation in our time are the fear, violence and abuse. We need to foster trust and collaboration. I suggested we need to emphasize a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We can help candidates develop or deepen the relationship. This is their affective center if they are to happily persevere." I continue to see these as important issues in our world today, and so are important in monastic formation, and I think a way forward may be a reinterpretation of some of our received tradition and following the suggestion by some in the Order, adopting a different anthropology. What I present today is part of a much longer paper I am preparing as a result of research over the last year.

WORK

Questions and comments about work are frequent in house reports and MGM minutes and in personal conversations. There are obvious concerns about work that affect community life and monastic formation. We have a received tradition about work that is articulated in the Rule of Saint Benedict, the *Exordium Parvum* and our Constitutions. I think we believe in this tradition and do our best to transmit it to the next generation. Perhaps difficulties in the area of work today are at least twofold: first the reality of our lived experience often does not correspond to the ideals of the tradition, and second, the concept of work has changed over time and especially in the twentieth century.

The received tradition tells us there is to be an ideal balance in labor, liturgy and lectio. The image of a three-legged stool is often invoked to describe how the life "rests or is balanced" upon these three legs. Times of reform, including the founding of Cîteaux, often are to bring about a restoration of the ideal balance. Our founders simplified the liturgy, as they had known it at Molesme and re-introduced manual labor. The balance is examined during the regular visitation. In our time though many experience an imbalance with far more time and energy being given to work than to the other two legs. This can be for individuals in a community that carry major responsibilities and/or for the majority of the community because of the community's situation. This is often noted in the house reports.

Our founders soon found that they could not do all the work required in the growing monastery. The *Exordium Parvum* tells us their answer: "9Having spurned this world's riches, behold! The new soldiers of Christ, poor with the poor Christ, began discussing by what planning, by what device, by what management they would be able to support themselves in this life, as well as the guests who came, both rich and poor, whom the Rule commands to welcome as Christ. 10It was then that they enacted a definition to receive, with their bishop's permission, bearded lay brothers, and to treat them as themselves in life and death except that they may not become monks and also hired hands; for without the assistance of these they did not understand how they could fully observe the precepts of the Rule day and night; 11likewise to receive landed properties far from the haunts of men, and vineyards and meadows and woods and streams for operating mills (for their own use only) and for fishing, and horses and various kinds of livestock useful far men's needs. 12And since they had set up farmsteads for agricultural development in a number of different places, they decreed that the aforesaid lay brothers, and not monks, should be in charge of those dwellings, because, according to the Rule, monks should reside in their own cloister. 13Also, because those holy men knew that the blessed Benedict had built his monasteries not in cities, nor in walled settlements or villages, but in places removed from populated areas, they promised to follow his example in this. 14And as he used to set up the monasteries he constructed with twelve monks apiece and a father in addition, they resolved to do likewise."¹

Benedict seems to have provided for workers other than monks as well. The line that suggests this is "If, however, the needs of the place, or poverty should require that they do the work of gathering the harvest themselves, let them not be downcast, for then are they monks in truth, if they live by the work of their hands, as did also our forefathers and the Apostles. However, on account of the faint-hearted let all things be done with moderation." ²Who was gathering the harvest in Benedict's monastery if not the monks?

Other texts from our tradition that inform us of the concept of work come from homilies and/or commentaries on the gospel story of Mary and Martha. Early in the Church's history manual labor, work, was highly esteemed for all, of whatever social class the new Christian came from. However, over time, and perhaps with the Greek influence, the spiritual was considered of more importance. This is a change from the Jewish tradition that so influenced the early church. "The Greeks saw manual work as fit for those who could not afford the leisure for the good life, the good citizen, and, as Aristotle saw it, the good philosopher. The Romans shared this view

1 Exordium parvum, Chapter Fifteen,
<http://users.skynet.be/scourmont/script/docprim/exorparv-chr-eng.htm>.
Accessed April 25, 2010.

2 RB 48:7-9

toward manual labor, as expressed by Cicero, who believed that selling one's labor was selling one's freedom. Slavery attached to physical work lowered the worth of work in the eyes of Greeks and Romans. Christianity had a different view. Masters and slaves were both regarded as brothers. Idleness was considered evil. Lowborn Christians attained high positions in the early Church, while highborn Christians did manual work in the lowliest occupations, and some wealthy Christians distributed their goods to the poor and took up a life of labor."³

To summarize so far: 1.) The need for workers from outside the community seems to have been a necessity both in Benedict's time and from the early days of Cistercians; 2.) There is some tension experienced about the balance of work and prayer not just related to work demands but also as a consequence of the teaching about the gospel story of Mary and Martha.

These two points, however, are not sufficient to explain the present experience, I believe. Further developments in the concept of work and the experience of work came in the twentieth century. The assembly line did much to change how people experienced work and how they came to perform the assigned work. There is not time to expand on this today, (I will do so in the longer paper I am preparing), but simply put, the workers revulsion at the new system gave way to habituation. How did it happen: increasing wages by a small percentage made possible doubling, tripling, and more the output by speeding up the line. Workers were anxious to keep their jobs so performed. The end product was the destruction of any other way of working. Worker pride and esteemed continued to diminish. Another reason for the ease of habituation of the workers to the assembly line was consumer debt.

As more than one researcher has pointed out, a similar process occurred for office workers. These are not so much knowledge workers as clerks. Original thinking and conceiving became the province of upper management. Others are expected to implement.

Those who enter our monasteries may or may not have experienced this. We do observe some who seem to have had one or other of the experiences--managers/originators or worker/clerk and thus have difficulties of various sorts with the concept and experience of monastic work. They may only know how to be managers and not how to be simple workers, or they may only know how to carry out tasks that are very clearly defined and requiring little original thinking or initiative—and other variations. All this as a consequence of previous work experience and if identified, could be more readily left behind as new ways are learned.

Educational systems in many countries prepare students for this work experience, one way or another. Again, there is not time to develop this now, though it is very important for the pedagogy we may choose to use in initial and on-going formation.

What does this have to do with formation, initial formation in our monasteries? A great deal, I think. To form young monastics to monastic work would seem to require at least the following:

- That we are clear about the reality to which we are forming candidates, especially if this differs from the ideal of the received tradition. What is our creative fidelity to the tradition, how do we transmit this without communicating ambiguity at the least, or a complete disconnect between what we teach regarding work and how we live out monastic work.
- That we are clear about Mary & Martha. Do we value both and see both as integral to Cistercian life? Are we really about the formation of the whole person?
- That we develop a 21st century alternative to *conversi* and that we value that adaptation and not grudgingly accept it until we can do better. I realize some monasteries already do this, and I also realize the economic difficulties that can result and the questions about where work, manual work, is in our life today? Perhaps the interdependence of monastics and lay Christians is important to our vocation. Let us not be guilty of false autonomy.
- That we educate ourselves to developments outside the monastic tradition as these impact the concept and experience of work (and all of our life). If we do not do this, our formation may not correspond to the reality of today and thus what we teach and how we live may be out of synch.

ANTHROPOLOGY

How do we make sense of the cultural crisis that we are in and the violence that is one of its characteristics? In the last year I came to see that the work of Rene Girard may help us in this and help us in formation. His work is better known in Europe even though he has lived and taught in the United States for over 50 years.

Summary of Girard's ideas:

1. Mimetic desire: imitation is an aspect of behavior that not only affects learning but also desire, and imitated desire is a cause of conflict,
2. The scapegoat mechanism is the origin of sacrifice and the foundation of human culture, and religion was necessary in human evolution to control the violence that can come from mimetic rivalry,
3. The Bible reveals the two previous ideas and denounces the scapegoat mechanism.⁴

The first point is related to the importance of desire in our tradition and Dom Bernardo Olivera's suggestion that we need to educate our desires and help others to do so. What Girard adds is that our desires are imitative desires--they come from others. This may be difficult for this individualistic age to accept, but observation of infants, children and adults supports the idea. This being true, the role of a community in formation is critical. The young learn to want what the seniors "have". And what do they "have" and does this correspond to what is being taught in our novitiates? The early desert monks learned by imitation and essentially that remains true for present day monks and nuns. It is not so much courses that impart the tradition; it is living and imitating the seniors in liturgy, work, and lectio. The pedagogy of imitation -- repetition

The mimetic theory of Girard's also explains the escalation of violence in the world today. Again there is not time to develop this today. However doing so, and seeing how Christianity upsets the negative mimetic imitation and conflict and denounces scapegoating, can also find room in our formation, especially for those who have experienced violence.

In community mimetic conflict takes the form of jealousy and envy. There is a passage in Gilbert of Hoyland's 19th sermon that is relevant to this topic:

4. Why do you wish through envy to ruin another's good? Will you add to yourself what you take from another? Perhaps so, if it is material wealth steal. Among persons in cloister, I do not fear rapacity of this kind. There is a more subtle kind of rapacity rooted in envy. Why do you not consider it rapacity if you spare someone's purse but steal his good name? You do not covet his possessions but you do tear his reputation to shreds. What gain does detraction of another confer upon you? If you carp at good qualities, what accrues to you from that? Perhaps on the manifest truth of another's virtue your teeth are being ground away in your mouth after you sharpened them for calumny. You dare not gnaw away at another and yet you cannot join in his praise. Because you no longer cheat him of his reputation by your words, are you therefore not robbing him? How is this not robbery, when you defraud evident goodness of its deserved tribute and when without spoiling by falsehood another's real worth, you suppress it by silence? Are you interested in hearing that there is robbery even in mere evaluation? 'He did not regard it as robbery', says the apostle, 'that he be equal to God.* A fair evaluation of another's good qualities cannot be conceived in an envious soul. For the envious soul refuses to think that another is acting well; although the envious person dare not object openly, within himself he either ignores or minimizes the other's merits. Why is that, if not because spite, while always thinking of its own excellence, casts a shadow over another's excellence?

One other aspect of Girard's work and application by others is the emphasis placed on the Cain and Able story. In fact James Allison's puts forth the thesis that here is "original sin", that is fratricide as a result of jealousy. This exegesis places more emphasis on other aspects of concupiscence than the sexual desire. This too may help us in the formative process, initial and ongoing.

4 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ren%C3%A9_Girard Accessed 6/11/2010.

I have simply proposed some ideas today that I believe can help us in formation in the 21st century. What I have presented is very sketchy and deserves fuller exposition and suggested practical implementations. I hope that it opens a discussion so that we can better serve those who come to our monasteries and those who are already faithful monks and nuns.

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