



Secrétariat Central à la Formation - oco -
Abbaye Notre-Dame du Val d'Igny, 31 mai 2019.

Newsletter 21

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

Region NED :

[Report VONK \[VONK= Formation for novices and temporary professed, together with the osb\]:](#)

Session in Doetinchem 9 till 14 September 2018. The session was led by Sister Gabriëlla (Brecht) on the topic of asceticism, and at the same time within the theme on which we worked this year, the vow of Monastic conversatio. Sister Gabriëlla spoke about asceticism from different angles. Jesus, the Son of God, lived poor, empty of himself, entirely given to his Father and his mission. A fitting approach ... To then look at Abba Antonius to see some means to look after that intimacy with God (e.g. vigilance, physical asceticism, balanced building of the day). Abba Pachomius also served us as an inspiration; in his poverty he got a new heart, true asceticism is an inner struggle, a constant availability for grace. The subject of asceticism was then further illuminated with the aid of more contemporary figures like Thomas Keating and Dag Hammarskjöld. Also very rich!

There were 21 participants - 9 novices and 12 temporarily professed, with the moderators - since then consisting of 2 members. There were 4 nuns oco and 1 nun osb; 7 monks oco; 9 monks osb.

It was a very successful session, contagious through the testimony, rich content and diversity. With fascinating texts for the exchange in small groups.

Session in Brecht from 20 to 25 January 2019. In this first session of the fourth *Vonk* year around the vow of consecrated life, we focused on the liturgy. The session was led by Sister Hildegard (Oosterhout) and Father Johan (Doetinchem). Sister Hildegard took us into the world of liturgy - its meaning and characteristics. Aspects such as worship, community events, Christ as a person; imagination of the Kingdom of God, reverence and respect were brought tastefully. Also liturgy and its feasts. The future as a feast, the past as a foundation rooted in a real event, and all this is being celebrated in the present. She also spoke about the backgrounds of the prayer of the hours and the liturgical calendar.

Father Johan gave us first a solid introduction '*sicut in caelo et in terra*'. We share in the Kingdom through repentance, baptism, and faith; together we form the body of Christ, and liturgy as a church in self-realization ... He also treated the basic structure of the Eucharist - four key actions: preparing the gifts; the thanksgiving; the breaking of the bread; the communion. In his third introduction he sketched the historical development of the monastic profession, ending with the reforms in the ritual of the solemn profession. We saw in a diagram a comparison between some official editions of the solemn profession.



There were 15 participants - 7 novices and 8 temporarily professed, together with the moderators (2). There were 4 nuns ocso and 1 nun osb; 4 monks ocso; 6 monks osb.

Again a good session that showed us the liturgy as the heart of the church and of the monastic life. Enough to go back home with a song. And to celebrate the life of each day as a feast of encounter.

We are grateful to all the teachers for helping to pass on the rich tradition of our lives in testimony, information and dialogue during the past working year. Thanks for all preparation, time and care. And because of the connectedness that we were always allowed to experience.

The atmosphere in the group is always fraternal. The novices and temporarily professed form as one group with a lot of understanding and openness for each other.

(Report by Dom Albéric, RSF. See more photos - group under the snow! - in **Annex 1**)

RAFMA :

[Report of an Inter-Noviciats' session in the Republic of the Congo:](#)

This session was held from 1 to 5 April 2019, around the theme: *Unity in the community life and resolution of conflicts through communication and dialogue*. Led by the Father Georges (Pallotin), it was attended by some sixty postulants and novices of the diocese of Goma. Father Justin, the RSF, shares the report of this session: see **Annex 2** (23 pages, in French):

"Dialogue and communication make us servants of God. A real communication at the level of the heart is at the service of the community. We are afraid of communication because it is a risk. Fear of intimacy makes us wear masks. There are several masks that we gather around four:



Group of novices from Mokoto who attended the session.



1. Mask of the critical. His best defence is to criticize. He is ready to go to war. It is necessary to other. The desire of others do not interest him.



2. Mask of the conciliatory. He is afraid to disturb. Always smiling. He does not live in the truth. He hides himself behind the others. He follows the majority, because he wants to please everyone. He suffers from a lack of self-esteem.



3. Mask of a computer. He knows everything. He does not express his feelings. What is important is to go for an intellectual. There is no possible connection between the head (reasoning), the heart (decision) and belly (emotions). A proverb says: "you becomes what you faces."



4. Mask of distracted. He expressed himself by surprise: "Oh, I forgot"; "Oh, this happens"? His eyes and mouth are open. He is absent to himself and to others. What he says made others laugh, but he brings nothing deep to the group. He hides in himself a wound of sadness!

The masks so stick us to the skin that we identify with them. It is difficult for us to dispossess of them." (page 10 of the report).

[Inter-Noviciates' session in France:](#)

A session for novices was held in the Abbey of La Trappe, from 13 to 17 May. The 50 participants reflected on the theme: *Affectivity, sexuality, chastity*. The session was moderated by Maëlis de Baynast and Yves Dagrégorio.

Annex 3: plan of the session, forwarded by the RSF, Father Thomas (1 ½ page, in French).

[About 900 years of the Charter of Charity:](#)

[Announcement of a session of Cistercian Spirituality:](#)

From July 29 to August 3, 2019 a session is offered to all the monks and nuns on the theme: *The 900 years of the Charter of Charity, history and news*. The meeting, which will take place in the Abbey of La Trappe, will be hosted by Dom Armand Veilleux (Scourmont) and Mother Mary-Helen Jackson (Bernardine d'Esquermes).

Annex 4: Registration formulary.

[Symposium in Paris:](#)

On 16 and 17 October 2019 will be held, in the *Collège des Bernardins* (Paris), an international symposium on the theme: *The Charter of Charity. 1119-2019: A document to preserve the unity between the communities*. This symposium is organized by the Association ARCCIS.

Among the speakers there will be, the first day: Dom Olivier (Cîteaux) and Mother Marie-Pascale (Brialmont); overnight: Dom Jean-Marc (Bellefontaine), Dom Vladimir (Lérins) and Mother Josephine-Mary (Bernardines d'Esquermes).

Annex 5: Flyer; **Annex 6:** Presentation of the speakers. For more information, see the website of ARCCIS.

Spanish Region:

[Report from a session of the PREM: \[PREM = Regional Programme of Studies of the Monasticat\]:](#)

From April 30 to May 15, 2019, at the monastery of Las Huelgas (Burgos), took place a session of the cycle of philosophical and theological studies. Report by Father Carlos Maria, RSF.

At this session, 29 students (OCSO, CCSB and three OSB) met. The following courses have been given: *Letters of St. Paul I* (P. Ignacio Rojas Gálvez, O.SS.T., from the Faculty of Theology of Granada); *Metaphysics* (Felipe Izquierdo); *Theology fundamental* (P. José Ignacio Manzano, OCSO); *History of the modern and contemporary Church* (P. Miguel Maria Vila, OCSO); *Sociology* (P. Bernabé Domínguez, OCSO).

The day of relaxation - which is always welcome in these days of courses - the group visited in Lerma, an exposition on sacred art *The Ages of Man*, entitled this year *Angels*. In the evening we prayed Nones with the community of the monastery of Silos (OSB). The prior showed us the precious roman cloister, the Museum and the old pharmacy.

To conclude our excursion, we sang Vespers and celebrated the Eucharist with the community of Villamayor los Montes (CCSB). Three of the members of this community are involved in the PREM, she has, moreover, a good group of young people in the novitiate. We were greeted with great enthusiasm and great joy. At the end of the celebration, we shared the meal in a festive atmosphere, with songs and African rhythms.



In **Annex 7:** another report by a student, Brother Daniel Maria (text without the photos).
