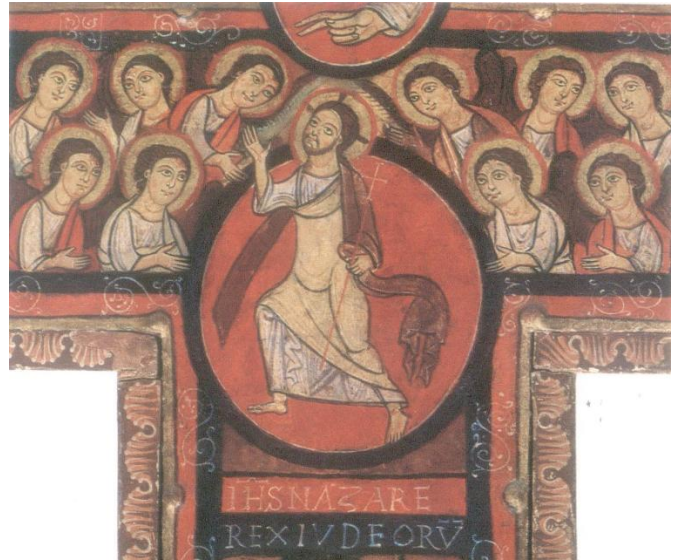


Newsletter 30

To the Superiors and the Regional Secretaries of the OCSO and to the brothers and sisters interested in formation.



US Region

Formation Course for Juniors (June 21-25, 2021)

Sr Pamela

Fr. **Daniel Hombergen, OCSO** (Guadalupe) gave sessions using the Zoom platform to the region's Juniors on *Emotional Disorder, Prayer and Healing in the Early Monastic Tradition*. Father has been translating monastic and patristic texts on prayer in preparation for a new book. Some of the texts were used in the course and additionally, he provided the Juniors with a paper with the same title written for them and possibly for future publication. As Fr Daniel wrote "Basically, this is about the emotional disturbance of 'Passions and Evil Thoughts' and its healing through the monastic ascetic struggle to 'attain purity of heart and a continual mindfulness of God' (cf. *Constitution 3:2*)" Reading and studying the paper was part of the preparation for the course. The Juniors were also advised to read "the most crucial parts of W. Harmless' *Desert Christians. An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (Oxford 2004)".

First, each day the morning session began at 8am PT/10am CT/11am ET. Fr Daniel spoke for about 50 minutes and a maximum of 20 minutes was allowed for questions from the juniors.

The afternoon discussion session began at 12:15 pm PDT/2:15 pm CDT/3:15 pm EDT and lasted in some cases for 1 ¼ hours. The discussion sessions were focused on a question given in the morning and focused on individual experience of the ascetic struggle. Fr Daniel and Sr Pamela joined the discussion on the final day.

The juniors found the Zoom platform better for asking questions than the live streaming used in May for the earlier sessions. As for these sessions, some said this was the best course they had had. We are grateful to Fr. Daniel for this wonderful learning experience and look forward to future classes from him.

RAFMA Region

Session for Monasteries of Central Africa (M.A.C.)

Theme: The economy in our communities

(July 1-7, 2021)

Three speakers were invited, a diocesan abbot **Jean Marie Vianney** from the diocese of Goma. Father **Martin Neyt**, former president of A.I.M. and Fr. **Simon Madeko**, Prior of the Benedictine Mambré monastery (Kinshasa).

This session has been reserved for Superiors and Bursars of member monasteries. 17 participants were present, Benedictines, Cistercians and Carmelites. Those from Rwanda did not participate following the closure of the Rwando-Congolese border, because the training took place in Goma in the DRC, it should be held at the Mokoto Monastery (OCSO), but following the insecurity in the region, it took place 90 km away, in the city of Goma, capital of the Province of North Kivu on the shores of the magnificent Lake Kivu in front of the Nyiragongo volcano which decimated on May 22 about fifteen villages and was, "Luckily" stopped at the tourist town gate.



Intervening by modern technique and zoom, from Belgium, **Father Neyt** developed in relation to the theme, three points:

1. ***Distinction between personal relationships and service structures.*** In this point the speaker maintains that the foundation of monastic life is that we are servants of one another. Thus each cellar and each superior must let himself be guided by his faith. The Father therefore invited the participants to be attentive to the poor in their service, to reorganize spiritually and financially the schools, workshops, health centers, hostels in a spirit of mutual aid and solidarity as Saint Benedict would like.

2. ***Our personal relationships.*** In this point he returns to the Colloquium that they had organized in 1989 with the support of Cardinal Malula, Mgr Tshibangu and Mgr Moke

on monastic life and Enculturation in which several theologians took part, among others, Fr. Bimwenyi Keshi, Bishop Mununu. Quoting the Senegalese griot (sorcerer?) Cissoko-Kouyate, he says that any meeting has four dimensions: in front, there are the circumstances and people who make the meeting possible, on the right, there are the faces that the eyes discover, on the left the Word, which, by listening and the magic of words generates communication and behind hides the interest of the meeting, this dimension transforms us, we leave different. So these four dimensions must be present in our community relations and externally with our workers.

3. ***The management of the structures which depend on the monastery.*** On this subject, the speaker recalls that the treasurer is the manager of services and organizer of concrete solidarity, referring to St Benedict who recommends selling the products of the monastery a

little cheaper to be close to the Gospel and not get lost in the unhealthy search for profit (Cf. RB 57).

Subsequently, Abbé **Marie Vianney** as economist and former general treasurer of the Diocese of Goma, dealt with the following themes:

- The balance sheet
- The income statement
- The obligations of non-profit organizations in the DRC
- Tax obligations
- Notions and calculation of interest
- Notion profitability

Due to lack of time, only the first point on the Balance sheet was processed. More details of the session in the attached file, in French.

The participants at the end of the session scheduled the next session after two years at N.D de Mvanda Monastery in DRC, for formators.

**Course on the Constitutions, offered by
Sr Eleanor of Glencairn**
(member of the Law Commission of the Order)

Over the last year I taught a **course on our Constitutions** in the novitiate here in Glencairn. Now I think it would be useful to make this course available more widely, and thanks to the development of online conferencing during the pandemic, it is possible to do so fairly easily. Online classes are not as satisfactory as in-person sessions, but they are significantly better than nothing.

So I offer a series of 26 classes (details below) on our OCSO Constitutions and Statutes, designed for those in initial formation. (If others are interested that would be all right from my perspective).

The course will begin in January 2022, with one class per week as far as possible until May or early June (about 15 classes, allowing for a few inevitable blank weeks due to sickness, technology failure, etc.); then a summer break (North Hemisphere); resuming in September or October, the remaining classes will finish before Christmas 2022, D.V.

The sessions will be “live”, in real time, and will be recorded. The recordings will be stored online and can be accessed afterwards by those unable to join at the time of the session itself.

I am offering the course firstly for those in the Region of the Isles, and the day and time of the sessions will be decided according to what works best for the Isles monasteries. But others will be very welcome to join too, either in real time (if that is suitable), or by accessing the recorded sessions later.

If you are interested in joining these sessions, please let me know (my email address is eleanor.campion@gmail.com) and I will keep you posted about developments.

A note on Zoom: I have been asked to consider using an online platform other than Zoom, given Zoom’s public statements in support of abortion. At the moment I am looking into this and it

seems quite feasible: there are a number of similar service providers and I am checking to see which seems best.

Outline of classes

NB: The order of the classes listed below follows the structure and numbering of our Constitutions, but they do not have to be taught in this order. So, for example, since we will (or at least expect to) have a General Chapter and election of a new Abbot General in Sept 2022, the classes on those topics could be taught before the summer break, so that the participants will be familiar with those topics before they happen in reality. Temporal administration, on the other hand, could wait until near the end. The nature of the material makes it quite flexible. Here is an outline of the proposed classes:

Class Topic

- 1 Why do we need law? What are Constitutions?
The Structure of the OCSO Constitutions
- 2 Csts 5-6, The Community; (*Statute on Oblates*)
- 3 Csts 7-12, Monastic Consecration
- 4 Csts 13-16, Life in Community
- 5 Csts 17-22, Prayer
- 6 Csts 23-30, Observances
- 7 Csts 31-32, Our Place in the Church; Review of Chapter One
- 8 Csts 33-40, The Service of Authority (I)
- 9 Csts 33-40, The Service of Authority (II)
- 10 Csts 41-44, Temporal Administration
- 11 *The Statute on Temporal Administration*
- 12 Csts 45-58, Formation (I)
- 13 Csts 45-58, Formation (II)
- 14 *The Ratio Institutionis*
- 15 Csts 59-66, Separation from the Community
- 16 C 67, Suppression of a Monastery; Proposed new *Statute*
- 17 Csts 68-70, Foundations; *Statute on Foundations* (I)
- 18 *Statute on Foundations* (II); Review of Part One
- 19 Csts 71-72, The Order; 73-74, Filiation, Father Immediate; 76, Chaplain
- 20 C 75, Regular Visitation; *Statute on the Regular Visitation* (I)
- 21 *Statute on the Regular Visitation* (II)
- 22 Csts 77-79, General Chapter (I)
- 23 Csts 77-79, General Chapter (II); C 80, Central Commission
- 24 C 81, Regional Conferences
- 25 Csts 82-83, The Abbot General
- 26 C 84, Council of the Abbot General; C 85, Abbot of Cîteaux; C 86, Conclusion

Homework will consist principally in reading the texts beforehand so that the students are already thinking about the topic of the week. Real-life situations and examples will be discussed as far as is discreet. Students' questions will be encouraged at the end of each session.