

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE GENERALATE

Meeting of
the Regional
Secretaries
for
Formation



The Central Commission of Chile (2024) requested, by a vote, that the 2025 General Chapter include the revision of the *Ratio Institutionis* on the agenda. The Abbot General has invited the Regional Secretaries for Formation to a meeting during which the text of the *Ratio* will be studied and proposals for revision will be formulated, serving as a basis for discussion at the General Chapter. This meeting will be held at the Abbey of Valsereña, from 13 to 20 June 2025.

Lived Liturgy

Cistercian
Order
**online
course**

The Cistercian Order invites the entire Cistercian family to participate in an online course on the theme: "Lived Liturgy", that is, on the liturgical life lived in our communities. It will be held from 2 to 6 June 2025. Lessons will be translated simultaneously into different languages, depending on the participants.

The programme, to suit different time zones, will include classes from 11:00 to 12:45 and 14:30 to 16:00 (Rome time). In addition to the Abbot General's Chapter, we will be accompanied by two Professors.

We include the course program here:

11 :00-11 :15 Chapter of the Abbot General Mauro Giuseppe LEPORI

11 :20-12:00 and 12:10-12:45 Prof. Don Pierangelo MURONI

The Impulses of the Magisterium: *Sacrosantum Concilium* and *Desiderio Desideravi*

14:30-15:10 and 15:20-16:00 Prof. Fr. Marco PAVAN

The Biblical vision of the liturgy: the psalms

In order to participate, you must register by e-mail to lluc.torcal@ocist.org by May 1, 2025. Once you have registered, you will receive a confirmation. The link to connect to Zoom will be sent by email a few days before the meeting. Please provide the email address which you will use during the lessons.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE REGIONS

ISLES

Sr. Sarah
(Glencairn)



Initial formation course 2024 video recordings

Video recordings made at last year's Initial Formation Course presented by Fr Michael Casey oco, entitled 'LIVING THE EXPERIENCE OF VOCATION' will be available to view on a weekly basis over the coming months. Please email Sr Sarah (ocso.isles.formation@gmail.com) if you would like to receive a link to this course of video lectures.



Formators meeting, Our Lady of Silence, Roscrea, 27th January – 1st February 2025

Sr Maureen McCabe oco of Mt St Mary's Abbey, Wrentham, USA, gave inspirational talks from her decades of experience as a formator to our biennial meeting of formators of the Region of the Isles last month on the discernment and nurturing of vocations in the Cistercian life.



Ongoing Formation Course, 25th – 27th March 2025

Fr Aelred Magee oco of Our Lady of Bethlehem Abbey, Northern Ireland, presented this year's Ongoing Formation Course on CISTERCIAN PATRIMONY. Those interested in accessing the videos, please contact Sr. Sarah: ocso.isles.formation@gmail.com



Initial formation course, Taura Mariakloster 11th – 18th October 2025

Bishop of Trondheim, Norway, and Cistercian monk of Mount St Bernard Abbey, England, Erik Varden will be teaching this year's formation course to our monks and nuns in Initial Formation entitled: 'WHY READ THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH?'

RAFMA Superiors' Workshop held at Our Lady of Praise Abbey Butende 2024

RAFMA
Sr. Elizabeth
(Butende)



This RAFMA meeting was held from the 5th to the 17th of July 2024. This was as a result of the vote that happened at Scourmont in the last Region meeting encouraged by the Abbot General in Support of formation. There were 16 superiors present, Madre Rachel Counsel Member of the Abbot General and two absent.

During this time there were two important celebrations: the 60th anniversary of the foundation of Our Lady of Praise Butende, which was on the 5th of July 2024 and the Solemn Profession of Brother Kizito of Our Lady of Victoria on the Solemnity of our Father Saint Benedict on the 11th of July 2024. These were two great moments of fraternal communion and of strengthening our following of Christ in the Order where we feel at home everywhere!

The meeting was opened with a welcoming word from Mother Jane and there after Dom John Bosco gave an introduction of what would happen in the following days. The workshop was organized into two parts. The time of the conferences centred on two main points, and the time of exchanges between superiors as a region on points that affect us directly, in particular those suggested to all the regions of the Order by the Abbot General.

Time for conferences:

a. The spiritual conference. This was a conference based on the issue of purgatory, which is no longer much talked about in the Church, but the consideration of which brought us back to our fundamental vocation, which is to intercede for ourselves and for the world, and in particular for our deceased brothers and sisters. One of the focal points of this conference was the need to examine one's conscience, to find out whether we are remaining true to our vocation or whether we are becoming diluted by a general

dulling and loss of spiritual values. For it is a reality that we can be in the monastery, yet living other values that are contrary to it. The preacher insisted on this point so that superiors can help their communities to refocus on this requirement, which is very similar to that of keeping one's thoughts in mind.

b. Conferences concerning the management of human resources. As superiors and therefore responsible, the need to manage human resources. This is something that can be learned and that enables us to better fulfil the responsibility of leading men and women, our brothers and sisters, in harmony and peace, in order to achieve together the goal that our community has set itself. These conferences focused in turn on five themes:

- Management and accountability
- Overview of human resources management
- Effective communication
- Introduction to strategic planning
- Introduction to project planning and management

Appendix : "**RAFMA formation**" – the full report.

Novice Masters' Formation

RE
Fr. Carlos Maria
(Sobrado)



Under the heading "CULTURE OF BEST PRACTICE AND PREVENTION OF ABUSE IN FORMATION. *Practice good zeal with the most ardent love*", Fr. Antonio Carrón de la Torre, OAR, professor at the Institute of Anthropology of the Gregorian University (Rome), gave a course from 2 to 6 July 2024 at the Abbey of San Isidro.

Formation programme:

- The culture of best practice in community settings.
- Risk and safeguarding for preventing personal and institutional vulnerabilities.
- The challenge of abuse of conscience and spiritual accompaniment.
- Steps in the Church's response to the abuse crisis and future challenges.
- The prevention of digital abuse in consecrated life.

Online formation on Saint Aelred of Rievaulx

In November and December 2024, Dom Roberto de la Iglesia, Abbot of Cardeña, gave an introductory course on Saint Aelred of Rievaulx. He presented us with the biography of Aelred and introduced us to his main writings.

In addition to the brothers and sisters of the RE and the Cistercian Congregation of Saint Bernard, some communities of REMILA and the sisters of the Congregation of Saint Bernard of Castile of the Cistercian Order participated.

Videos of the courses (10 hours) are available in Spanish. If a brother or sister of the Order is interested, contact Fr. Carlos Maria: secretarioformacion.re@gmail.com

Caring for Others and Taking Care of Ourselves in Community Life



- Physical care.
- Emotional care.
- Spiritual care.
- Relational care.
- Community care

Due to the strong interest generated by the formation program for novice masters—and given that the theme of prevention of abuse and fostering healthy community relationships is a central aspect of formation for all monks and nuns—the Secretariat for Formation invited Fr. Antonio Carrón de la Torre, OAR, to offer an online formation open to all community members. The series was titled: "Caring for Others and Taking Care of Ourselves in Community Life."

Over four sessions of two hours each, held in March 2025, Fr. Antonio addressed the following topics:

- The culture of best practice in our lives and mission
- Power, authority, and obedience in consecrated life
- The culture of safeguarding in the Church
- The impact of digital life on consecrated life

The formation sessions are available in Spanish. If any brother or sister of the Order is interested in accessing the videos, please contact Fr. Carlos Maria.

**Formators' Meeting
Monastery of Miraflores
16 - 25 October 2024**

REMILA
Sr. María
Antonia
(Humocaro)



The speaker was Fr. Carlos Gutiérrez Cuatango, Prior of Sobrado, to whom we are deeply grateful.

The course focused primarily on personal self-knowledge, drawing from reflections on the theme “Vulnerability: Opportunity for the Best and Worst.” One of the key topics was the presentation of an anthropological model using the image of three layers or rings, offering a new perspective on our inner dynamics.

Fr. Carlos Cuatango emphasized the importance of learning to manage our own wounds so that we are better prepared not to confront the novice’s wounds with our own. He guided us in identifying the middle layer of vulnerability, where the wounded inner child resides.

Conflicts with others often arise when our respective layers of protection clash. What we must learn to do is recognize these layers, accept them, and understand how and why they were formed. By touching our most vulnerable side, we open the way to connect with others through compassion and mercy.

We are called to make a journey back home—to that most intimate space within us that we have lost—where we are animated by the Holy Spirit. Yet, we often remain on the surface.

Fr. Carlos then explored attachment disorders, which can have significant consequences in adulthood. These include ambivalent attachment, which gives rise to a confused sense of self; avoidant (or evasive) attachment, leading to a disconnected self; disorganized attachment, resulting in a fragmented or unreal self.

The wounded child, in developing defence mechanisms such as escape, aggression, or freezing/paralysis—among others—tends to seek refuge in the outer protective layer rather than moving toward the centre of the self. This raises a crucial question: How can the wounded child be healed?

For us, as Cistercian monks and nuns, healing and transformation through love take place within our very way of life. This lifestyle, wisely shaped and refined through centuries of lived experience, helps restore the image we have lost and strengthens us in love.

Appendix: “**REMILA Formación**” – the full report in Spanish.

Other Regional Activities in Ongoing Formation:

- In June 2024, we held an online course with Fr. Enrique Contreras, OSB, titled "Our Benedictine–Cistercian Identity," aimed at renewing our awareness of who we are. The course was attended by nearly all the communities of REMILA and was highly appreciated by all.
- Looking ahead to 2025, our junior monks and nuns are preparing to gather at the Monastery of Boa Vista (Brazil) for a course focused on the OCSO Constitutions.

We are also grateful for the invitations from the RE to participate in the courses organized by its formation team, which are generously shared online with our region.