

Europe-Israel Region

REI 2025

Tamié

(France)

28 April - 3 May 2025

Participants

Dom Samuel Lauras, Abbot of Nový Dvůr (99), president of the region,
Chairman of the Ćelenberg (09) and Engelszell (47) Commissions for Closure

Dom Thomas Getti, Abbot of Sept-Fons (08)

Dom Marco Bassignana, Abbot of Tamié (12)

Dom Guillaume Jedrzejczak, Monastic Commissary of Latroun (40)

Mother Magdalena König, titular Prioress of Donnersberg (70), vice-president

Mother Marie-Josée Stocker, Abbess of Baumgarten (04)

Mother Marie-Claire Pauchard, Abbess of La Fille-Dieu (17)

Mother Catherine Masserey, titular Prioress of Géronde (73)

Guests:

Dom Emmanuel Cottineau, Councillor to the Abbot General

Mother Bénédicte Avon, superior *ad nutum* of Blauvac (05, REM) [Thursday 1 May]

Mother Bénédicte Barras, Superior of the Bernardines of Chambarand

Brother Laurent (Tamié), Regional Celegate to the General Chapter of 2025

Dr Pauline Moisson de Vaux, addiction psychiatrist [Thursday 1 May]

Sister Marie-Samuel (Blauvac) [Thursday 1 May]

Secretary :

Father Jean-Théophane (Sept-Fons)

Office :

Dom Samuel, Mother Magdalena, Dom Marco, Mother Marie-Claire

Introduction

The Regional Meeting took place this year in Tamié, France, where Abbot Dom Marco and his community welcomed us.

Since the last Regional Meeting, the community of Celenberg has voted to close. Baumgarten Abbey has requested affiliation to Val d'Igny: Mother Marie-Josée's resignation will take effect on 15 May. At Sept-Fons, Dom Thomas was elected abbot on 23 August 2024.

Mother Praxedis, former superior of Donnersberg, died on 27 December, as did Father Hubert, former superior *ad nutum* of Engelszell, on 18 January.

We also welcomed a new guest, Mother Bénédicte, superior of the Bernardines de Chambarand. The Bernardine Fraternity, a public association of lay faithful under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Grenoble, has been based in the monastery of Chambarand since 2020.

The REM region was represented by Mother Bénédicte de Blauvac, who came with Sister Marie-Samuel for a day. Dom Emmanuel represented the Generalate. Brother Laurent de Tamié will be our region's delegate to the next General Chapter.

On the agenda were the following items:

1. A summary of the 2024 Central Commission,
2. The house reports and the Regional Report for the General Chapter of 2025,
3. The distribution of regions and the REI-REM union project,
4. Feedback on Mothers Immediate and Fathers Immediate,
5. The meeting of Regional Secretaries for Formation,
6. A one-day lecture by Dr Pauline de Vaux.

1. The 2024 Central Commission

Dom Emmanuel summarised the decisions of the Central Commission held in June 2024 in Chile. The choice of meeting in Latin America, as well as the invitation to visit other communities on the continent, was particularly appreciated by the brothers and sisters of this region, who were happy both to welcome and to be visited.

The Central Commission examines all the votes taken in the various regions in preparation for the General Chapter. Attention should be paid to the so-called "summary" votes, which make sense in the context of a regional meeting, but may not be clear enough for other regions. The Central Commission also acts as the Abbot General's plenary council. The regional delegate who sits on it, and their deputy, are appointed at the General Chapter. It is therefore important that those who accept this responsibility are prepared to travel if necessary.

A few adjustments have been made to the organisation of the 2025 General Chapter. The opening and closing Masses will be filmed and broadcast. The number of commissions will be reduced from 14 to 13, each comprising 10 to 12 capitulants. When a subject is dealt with by the extraordinary procedure, a summary of the summaries of the 13 commissions will be produced in order to guarantee a sufficiently high quality of listening in the plenary assembly. Professional interpreters will be present in the aula, while translation within the commissions will be provided by the brothers and sisters themselves. The Central Commission recalled the discretion required in the work of the General Chapter, as well as the delicate balance to be maintained between transparency and confidentiality. In addition, **an online training course will be organised on 16 July, mainly for new superiors and delegates.**

The subject of acts of extraordinary administration (cf. C. 44) gave rise to a lengthy discussion; it will therefore be examined according to the extraordinary procedure. The aim is to determine the threshold above which expenditure requires the agreement of the conventual chapter or the General Chapter. The threshold above which the authorisation of the Holy See is required is defined by the Bishops' Conferences. By way of example, for France (which has three communities in our region), this amount was set at €2,500,000 in 2008.¹ The main thing is to clarify the decision-making procedures: intervention by the cellarer with the abbot's agreement, agreement by the finance committee, information or vote by the conventual chapter, etc. The aim is to protect communities against decisions being taken too quickly and in isolation, with far-reaching consequences.

2026 will mark the 400th anniversary of the birth of the Abbé de Rancé.

2. House and Regional Reports to the 2025 General Chapter

The house report is a public document, published in the proceedings of the General Chapter. The possibility of a visual presentation is open. At the 2025 General Chapter, the president of the commission studying the situation of a house will also receive, confidentially, the house's visitation card translated into his own language. The visitation card will only be read to the members of the commission if necessary and will be returned at the end of the Chapter for destruction.

The regional report, meanwhile, provides a snapshot of what is happening across the Order. Until now, these reports have been read out, but it is now possible to present a 7-minute video. Regional reports will only be discussed in the aula. "These reports should aim to share the cultural richness and diversity of the houses in addition to news of events and challenges" (CC 2024, p. 9).

Our region is trying out a video presentation. Father Theofan from Nový Dvůr is capable of editing it, under the responsibility of Dom Samuel. This document could be made up of two parts: firstly, a presentation of the communities in terms of age, number and difficulties; then a second, more thematic part on the challenges and issues. There are in fact shared realities in our region: the burden of work to be reconciled with monastic life, how to forgive one another, how to pass on responsibilities to younger people, fragility as a witness, etc. **Please send Dom Samuel the statistics given in the house report, as well as the number of brothers in formation.**

3. The distribution of Regions and the REI-REM union project

At the General Chapter, a new distribution of regions will be discussed: non-European regions are questioning the representation of European monasteries, currently divided into 7 regions (with 5 working languages) out of the 11 that make up the Order. The planned working document has been replaced by a survey sent to members of the Order.

Returning to the origin of the regions in the Order, Dom Guillaume introduced the discussion on their distribution and the proposal to unite the Europe Israel Region (9 members, soon to be 8) and the Europe Mediterranean Region (12 members), a project that would bring together some twenty houses.

¹ See <https://www.droitcanonique.fr/codes/cic-1983-1/c-1292-cic-1983-1292>, footnote.

Presentation by Dom Guillaume
The question of the distribution of regions
REI & REM 2025

I propose to address the question of the regions in four points. Firstly, a brief history based on two articles by Dom Armand Veilleux on the subject in the book "The Cistercian Order of Strict Observance in the Twentieth Century", (*Du Concile Vatican II à la fin du siècle*, Vol 2, 21-24 & 139-143, Rome 2008). Then, in a second point, I will try to express some general principles. In a third section, I will outline the roles currently assigned to the regions. And finally, in the fourth point, I will propose a list of questions that could be the subject of discussion among us.

1. History of the OCSO regions

In the 1950s and 1960s, a number of abbots expressed a desire to meet to discuss pastoral issues, despite Dom Sortais' fear that this would become a breeding ground for separatism. It was Dom Gillet, in 1964, who asked the Dutch abbots for their opinion on a project for a simplified foundation. These abbots took advantage of this meeting to discuss other points to be proposed to the General Chapter.

A commission, which later became the Central Commission, was then set up to prepare the Chapter and sought the opinion of the regions. This is why the regions were officially created in 1965. Their legal status and role were not defined until 1967. The role of the delegates, the participation of the nuns and the issues to be dealt with in relation to the General Chapter were to change their appearance.

In 1971, the regional conferences were instituted as permanent structures of the Order. In 1977, a document specified their two functions: to prepare the General Chapter and to extend the pastoral action of the General Chapter. The regions were no longer free meetings of superiors, but grouped communities together according to geographical criteria, and required the approval of the General Chapter.

There were to be a number of changes to the regions over time. In 2005, the European regions were reshaped, marking the birth of the REM and the REI.

2. General principles for allocating regions

The distribution of the regions reflects the twofold orientation that presided over their creation: on the one hand, they seek to be a place for sharing and mutual support, and on the other, they are institutional structures responsible for preparing the General Chapter.

This is why they are organised by combining criteria that are sometimes contradictory, accentuating one aspect or another:

- geographical criteria in the broadest sense,
- linguistic and cultural criteria,
- the affinity criterion, linked to filiation, history, links between communities, sympathies and antipathies...

This distinction between objective and subjective criteria still exists and explains the diversity of today's regions.

While the geographical criterion plays an essential role in Asia-Pacific, the geographical and cultural criteria in South America, the USA, Africa and Spain, a more affinitive criterion also determines the distribution of the regions in Europe, with the particular case of Canada, which has just joined CNE.

It is not a question of making a value judgement, but of taking this diversity into consideration as a fact that undoubtedly reflects a need. Mother Isabelle of Igny's proposal to distinguish between the two functions of the regions and to translate this into a new organisation into regions and sub-regions reflects this reality.

3. Role of the regions

In the beginning, therefore, the role of the regions was one of pastoral mutual aid, initially between superiors. They then evolved into meetings of communities, with delegates from the communities, mainly concerned with preparing the work of the Central Commissions and General Chapters. When the drafting of the Constitutions was completed, the desire to return to a more pastoral dimension was emphasised.

This dual dimension of pastoral work and preparation for the Central Commissions and the General Chapter creates a certain tension, as Dom Armand Veilleux remarked.

4. Questions that arise

- In the second GC *newsletter* (6 March 2025), Mother Isabelle of Igny wondered whether the two roles should not be split: preparation of the GC in larger regions, pastoral care in smaller sub-regions.

- Dom Armand Veilleux, in his contribution (21-24) on the link between the regions and the central commission, wondered whether it would not be necessary to rethink the way things worked, by creating a general secretariat responsible for synthesising the contributions of the regions, and then a genuine body for separate reflection working with the Abbot General and his council.

- What role could the regions play in the delicate issue of community closures: the future of movable and immovable property, artistic heritage, profit-making activities, etc. Should this be left to the decision of the few brothers who close the house? Can't we think of a wider solidarity for the houses in need?

- How can the regions take on the responsibility of chaplains for communities of nuns, when the mother houses of monks no longer have the capacity to do so? Their geographical and linguistic proximity and their networks can be a great help.

- Could the regions organise themselves to have economic visitors who can act *ad intra* and possibly *ad extra*?

- What links are there between the Commissions of Aid, the Monastic Commissioners, the Fathers and Mothers Immediate and the regions?

- What role could the regions play in foundations that are still fragile after many years, when the mother houses close?

- In some regions, the number of houses is falling considerably. Should they simply close? What links of solidarity, exchange and mutual aid are possible?

- Formation is a crucial issue today. How can we think about it at regional and inter-regional levels? Isn't it necessary to pool resources?

Following the presentation, a number of reactions and points of view were shared.

The level of the regions, situated between the communities and the General Chapter, is seen as an asset: with several people, you have more ideas than on your own. The region is therefore involved in the commissions of aid, and the Central Commission has decided that the region should henceforth be consulted on any extension of the term of office of a superior *ad nutum*.

With regard to chaplains for the nuns, it was suggested to turn to bishops who have resigned, who are often available and looking for a place or a mission to take on.

The question of the assets of closing communities was also raised. One possibility raised was the sale of certain works of art, in particular to pay off accumulated debts.

On the economic front, there is a need for readjustment. Several houses are now dependent on other communities with brewery-related revenues. This situation is not sustainable in the long term. We need to move towards greater financial autonomy. One option for alleviating the burden of requests on donors could be to pass everything through the Commission of Solidarity.

With regard to the future of the regions, it was pointed out that the purpose must be clearly defined: is it primarily pastoral or legal? It is this orientation that will then make it possible to determine the appropriate size of the regions. Experience shows that when groups exceed fifteen participants, exchanges become more cumbersome, particularly when translations have to be organised.

Finally, a fundamental question was asked: are our current structures still suitable for the realities of the Order? We envisage Mothers Immediate, because Fathers Immediate are lacking. Monastic commissioners were introduced in order to keep within the Order the management of situations previously entrusted to apostolic administrators. Can we make what exists work more consciously, perhaps adjusting our working methods?

As part of the reflection on the union of the REI and REM regions, Mother Bénédicte de Blauvac spent a day with us. In return, Dom Guillaume will take part in the REM meeting at Bonneval for two days.

Before the General Chapter, each superior in our region is invited to consult their community on the REI-REM union project. At present, one community has voted unanimously. In another community, there is no opposition, but no special interest in this question.

4. Experience of Mothers and Fathers Immediate

1. Current experience of "Mothers Immediate"

At the REI 2024 in Steinfeld, we talked about " Mothers Immediate " on a theoretical level. This year, Mother Marie-Josée shared her experience with Mother Isabelle du Val d'Igny.

For Baumgarten, the question of the Father Immediate arose with the 75th birthday of Dom Dominique and the closure of Celenberg (Celenberg was initially under the rule of a monastic commissioner: in this situation, the daughter houses came back under the authority of the Abbot General). Celenberg was not the founding community in the strict sense of the word, but a welcoming, adoptive community, when the Prussians expelled the sisters from Rosenthal- Darfeld. When the sisters settled in Ergersheim-Altbronn, the monks helped them. Celenberg and Altbronn faced similar difficulties at the same time. When Celenberg failed, the sisters turned to the "Grandfather Immediate ", Acey, or the "Great-grandfather Immediate ", Port-du-salut.

Today, the reality is no longer the same, and it is this reality that has led to the present situation. At Steinfeld in 2024, the question arose: would the community accept a "Mother Immediate"? The

only abbess who spent time in community at Baumgarten was Mother Isabelle. It was also the community that was the furthest away.

The regular visitation was the starting point for the sisters' relationship with Mother Isabelle, to whom the responsibility of Father Immediate was delegated. The Val d'Igny community felt that Mother Isabelle was already fully occupied, but understood that it was not possible to refuse the request of the Baumgarten community. Mother Isabelle continued the pastoral practice of the Father Immediate of visiting the sisters in Baumgarten.

This situation was intended to last for a few months, since on 15 May, Mother Marie-Josée's resignation will become effective and the Baumgarten community will be affiliated to the Val d'Igny. Mother Isabelle will then become the major superior and the superior of Acey will become Father Immediate. Mother Isabelle plans to appoint Mother Marie-Josée as local superior under the affiliation statute.

On the subject of the Mothers Immediate, Mother Marie-Josée believes that at some point the complementarity of the male and female 'poles' will be lacking and will be felt. Having said that, the Mother Immediate may ask to be accompanied by an abbot, or, when she has to delegate the regular visitation every 6 years, ask an abbot for this task. In the end, it depends a lot on the individual.

Following Mother Marie-Josée's presentation, several reactions were shared. The delegation of the responsibility of Father Immediate to a superior is a practice initiated at the General Chapter of 2022. It developed rapidly. Current feedback is positive. The establishment of a "Mother Immediate" seems to work well for the three parties concerned: the community that benefits from it, the superior who assumes this responsibility and acquires pastoral experience, and the community of this superior. However, it was pointed out that there are communities that do not wish to have a Mother Immediate: this choice should naturally be respected.

2. Role of the Father immediate

Dom Marco presented the role of the Father Immediate based on Appendix I of the working document on Mothers Immediate: "The role and responsibility of a Father Immediate in our current legislation".

Presentation by Dom Marco

Some thoughts based on the document :

"Introduction to the Role and Function of the Father Immediate"

Through this document, I became more aware (being directly involved myself) of the importance of this ministry, and also of the Regular Visitation, which is the concrete act through which this ministry is expressed.

It seems to me that the "good" or "bad" functioning of our communities depends to a large extent on the link, the relationship between the Father Immediate and his daughter houses, between the Father Immediate and the Abbot/Abbess of the community visited.

This ministry of the Father Immediate is complex and demanding. It is essential for the Father Immediate to ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to discern how to act in such and such a situation... and to be able to say with courage, humility and charity what he feels, in conscience, he should say.

There are two dimensions to this document, and these two dimensions are deeply intertwined:

- a. the pastoral dimension,
- b. the legal/temporal dimension.

I will focus on the pastoral dimension, in particular the term "Father".

a. The pastoral dimension

The Father Immediate has to exercise a ministry of paternity towards his daughter houses; but this paternity, the document points out, is not one of governance.

Characteristics of this paternity :

- vis-à-vis the Abbot: to assist, support and help in his pastoral work.
- vis-à-vis the community: to encourage progress and harmony within the community.
- with humility and charity, help to remedy situations that are not in keeping with the Rule or the Order.
- be concerned about the quality of the formation given in his daughter houses and help the abbot or abbess to seek solutions to particular difficulties in formation (*Ratio institutionis* 66).

In particular, he exercises his ministry through vigilance. He watches over the progress of his daughter houses.

Progress. I don't find this a very happy term; suggestion: "to ensure that the daughter house grows in fidelity to the Cistercian charism" or "to ensure that the Cistercian charism is lived to the full".

Vigilance. I am thinking of the magnificent verb "to watch", so present in the words of Jesus... Watch. Or in the letter of Peter: "Be shepherds of the flock of God that is in your midst; watch over it, not by compulsion but willingly, according to God; not out of greed but out of devotion; not commanding as masters those entrusted to you, but becoming the models of the flock" (1 Peter 5, 2-3).

Promoting community harmony... promoting communion / *koinonia* in the community.

- It is the first instance of appeal and recourse:

"When a community experiences a situation of great fragility it deserves special attention of the Father Immediate" (C. 67.1).

A fragile community "should ask for and accept help from the Father Immediate" (*Statute on Fragile Communities* 4).

"In a situation of increasing fragility in his daughter house, the Father Immediate must have the courage to help the superior and the community to face this reality. The regular visitation is the most suitable instrument for this purpose" (*Statute on Fragile Communities* 5; *Statute on Regular Visitation* 15).

b. Legal/Temporal Dimension

The Father Immediate, as part of his general role of vigilance, will see that this Statute is observed in his daughter houses. (*Statute on Temporal Administration* 30.e, cf. C. 74.1).

It is for each monastery to apply and practice the norms of the Statute on Temporal Administration in agreement with their Father Immediate and according to local culture, circumstances and traditions. (*Statute on Temporal Administration* 2).

It is the first instance of appeal and recourse:

- It belongs to the General Chapter to ensure that the members of the Order have the possibility of unimpeded recourse to the various instances of appeal as needed: that is to the Father Immediate, the Abbot General, the General Chapter or the Holy See. (St 77.2.B, m and f).
- In the case of a negative judgment on a book presented for an *imprimi potest*, a monk or a nun can have recourse to the Father Immediate or the Abbot General. (*Statute on Publications* 9).

It is also a channel through which a brother can submit wishes or suggestions to the General Chapter:

- Any brother can submit desires or suggestions to the General Chapter. This is done through his abbot or Father Immediate, through the regional conference or the regional delegate, or even directly through the Abbot General. (ST 77.2.A monks, not nuns as the text was not updated after the Single Chapter).

Two points to clarify:

- In this document, it is stated that in the case of *sede vacante* of a monastery of men, the Father Immediate assumes responsibility for all things, whereas for nuns, this falls to the Prioress.
- Solemn profession: Father Immediate presides over the solemn profession of the nuns, whereas he does not preside over that of the monks.

Chaplain to the nuns. This article seems obsolete to me given the current situation of our monasteries. Father Immediate can help if necessary to find a solution. It seems to me that it's up to the abbess and her sisters to get involved... and to check with the diocese.

Following this presentation, a number of thoughts were shared on the role and exercise of the function of the Father Immediate.

The Father Immediate exercises authority. If certain communities today find themselves in a very fragile state, it is possible that the Father Immediate did not do everything he should have done or that he was prevented from acting. He remains a man, with his gifts and his limitations.

When you become a Father Immediate, it seems preferable to start with a friendly visit, then to maintain this bond of friendship between regular visits. This helps to build a relationship of trust over time.

The involvement of the community of the Father Immediate was also mentioned. For example, a Father Immediate can take a brother from his own community with him when he visits the daughter houses, in order to strengthen ties.

Paternity is not limited to the spiritual aspect: it touches on temporal and economic realities. But it is important to avoid economic issues taking precedence over the spiritual dimension.

In all circumstances, the discernment of the Father Immediate is better if he is assisted by someone else.

Returning to a theme addressed at REI 2024, the distinction between filiation and regular visitation was again discussed. Filiation concerns the common origin between monasteries, a shared "DNA" that goes back to the founding process. It is linked to a state: one is born this way. Regular visitation, on the other hand, has an objective: to verify what a community is living, with regard to the texts of the law (cf. C. 75). However, in the Constitutions, the Father Immediate (cf. C. 74) is associated with the regular visitation: this causes a certain amount of confusion. This mixture of plans can make it more difficult to resolve problems. The Father Immediate is part of a continuity of filiation, a continuity of "DNA"; the visitor, for his part, can question this tradition, this "DNA", the diversity of which goes back to the origins of the Order: Cîteaux, Morimond for Eastern Europe, Clairvaux; or again to the three Trappist congregations brought together in 1892: La Trappe, Westmalle/Melleray, Port-du-Salut/Sept-Fons. Among the nuns from Vaise, for example, there is a feeling of belonging to the same family.

The way in which a community receives the visitation card is also important. Some Fathers Immediate know how to respect the specific character of communities; others find it more difficult to make room for this diversity.

Finally, a discussion was initiated on the distinction between authority and power, which is not defined in C. 74. Can we say that the Father Immediate is an authority, while the visitor embodies a form of power? In this context, the abuses can be seen as a drift away from authority that is transformed into power, according to the reading proposed by Hannah Arendt.

3. Designation: Father Immediate, Mother Immediate

Following on from the discussion on Mothers Immediate, there was some reflection on the meaning of the terms used.

The experience of the Commissions of Aid has shown that a nun has her own way of looking at things. A monk reacts as a man, a nun as a woman: this complementarity is precious. In certain delicate situations, particularly when communities are closing, this feminine sensitivity helps to overcome obstacles.

It was also pointed out that the roles of father and mother are not interchangeable. "Father, mother, filiation": the words used are taken from the natural language of the family and reflect different realities. A father has one type of relationship with his sons and another with his daughters; the same applies to a mother with her daughters and sons. So some people regret a confusion of vocabulary: talking about an abbess who plays the role of Father Immediate. An abbess plays the role of mother!

Then there's the question of priesthood.

More broadly, thinking should not be based solely on concrete problems. It sometimes seems that the urgency or difficulty of the moment takes precedence over in-depth reflection. However, prudence recommends not changing the fundamental structures of the Order too easily.

In short, if the current experience of "Mothers Immediate" is perceived positively, it is above all because the people in charge know how to exercise their responsibility with accuracy and discernment.

4. Authority and power

Following on from the discussion on the role of the Father Immediate, the relationship between authority and power was explored in greater depth.

Several philosophers were mentioned, including Alexandre Kojève, author of *La notion de l'autorité*, and Gérard Mendel, author of *Une histoire de l'autorité*. Hannah Arendt, for her part, looked for the sources of authority in order to understand its crisis.

True authority imposes itself, without recourse to coercion or persuasion. In our communities, some difficulties arise simply from the fact that people have very different ideas of what authority is. In this context, for example, what is now seen as abuse of authority may once have been considered harmless or even normal.

5. Meeting of Regional Secretaries for Formation

From 13 to 20 June, a meeting of Regional Secretaries for Formation will be held in Valserena (Italy). The aim of the meeting will be to prepare a revision of the *Ratio institutionis*. Our region does not currently have a Regional Secretary for Formation. A vote was therefore held to appoint a representative: Father Gaël, master of novices at Tamié, was elected with 7 votes out of 9.

6. Lecture by Dr Pauline de Vaux

Dr Pauline de Vaux, an addiction psychiatrist, led a day of talks and discussion on the theme of "Maturity and discernment". The summary of the discussions that took place is reproduced in a separate document and is not included in these minutes.

Evaluation

The hospitality of the community of Tamié was much appreciated, with a special mention for the music: organ and zither were much appreciated. Many thanks to the whole community.

It was the first time in a long time that all the members of the region were present. The atmosphere was simple and fraternal. Discussions were open and sincere, allowing everyone to present their community as it is, with its difficulties, but also to open up to the life of other communities in the Order. The presence of new faces was welcome. The presence of Dom Emmanuel provided precise information on the changes underway in the Order.

Even though some communities are closing, others are opening up. The presence of Mother Bénédicte de Chambarand is a sign of this. Thank you to her for her service as cantor during the services in session. We sincerely hope that she will be invited back for future regional meetings.

The structure of Dr de Vaux's talk was not immediately clear in the first part. However, the main intention emerged: the unconditional welcome of the poor and the possibility for a therapist to base his or her work on a theological foundation. The idea of exploring a theme in greater depth at regional meetings was considered to be relevant, particularly when it can nourish the life of the communities.

A number of ideas were put forward: "authority, power, abuse", "abuse of power, of conscience, control over the person"; or a reflection on Constitution 34: how can we understand today that the abbot is superior to the external forum and the internal forum?

Finally, while the future of the region is in question, the fact that it operates as a group, and in particular within the 'bureau' set up last year, was recognised as progress that should be supported and continued.

General Chapter: from Tuesday 2 to Wednesday 24 September 2025 in Assisi (Italy)
