

FORMATION OCSO

August 2025
#39

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE GENERALATE

Monastic
Formators'
Program



A 12-week program for those involved in formation in monastic communities

2026 dates : Tuesday 10 March – Monday 1 June
The language of the course is English.
The cost will be €7200.

MORE INFORMATION

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REGISTER NOW

Registration deadline : **30 September 2025**
Applications after that date will be considered according to availability.

More information available at: <https://www.collegiosantanselmo.com/en/curia-of-the-benedictine-order/monastic-formators-program/>

**Meeting of
the Regional
Secretaries for
Formation**



Participants

Dom Bernardus, Abbot General
Dom Marco Antonio, Councillor of the Abbot General
Fr Carlos Maria (Sobrado/Generalate), Commission for Formation
Sr Sarah (Glencairn), ISLES
Dom Alberic (Schiermonnikoog), NED
Fr Samuel (Tarrawarra), ORIENS / Commission for Formation
Sr Elisabeth (Butende/Generalate), RAFMA / Commission for Formation
Sr María de los Ángeles (Armenteira), RE
Sr Agnès (Campénéac), RÉCIF
Br Gaël (Tamié), REI
Sr Fatima (Valserena), REM
Sr María Antonia (Humocaro), REMILA
Sr María Gonzalo (Crozet), USA
Fr Richard, (Generalate), Secretary

The Regional Secretaries for Formation met at Valserena from 13-20 June. The Abbot General was present for the first day of the meeting and gave a conference in which he presented the history of the current Ratio Institutionis (1990), the reasons behind the request of the Central Commission to consider a revision of the document and a brief overview of some official church publications on formation in religious institutes issued since 1990. The Abbot General also presented his own thoughts on various aspects of a possible revision of the Ratio Institutionis. This was followed by times for discussion, both in language groups and among the full assembly.

Following the conference of the Abbot General, the Regional Secretaries for Formation each presented their own reports about the proposals for adjustments to the existing text of the

Ratio. These reports were then discussed over several days in language groups and in the full assembly.

With everyone's participation, alternating between reflection in language groups and plenary sessions, drawing on the conference of the Abbot General and the reports of the Regional Secretaries, we produced a draft report.

When the Draft Report was presented, there was general consensus that it faithfully reflected the main points raised during the meeting. It was also agreed that the draft provides a clear direction for the work of revising the Ratio Institutionis moving forward.

The main topics addressed in the report included: the relationship between initial and ongoing formation; human formation; spiritual accompaniment; supervision; safeguarding and accountability; integral ecology; cultural aspects; structured initial formation (including evaluation criteria); collaboration and synodality; and the roles of both Central and Regional Secretaries of Formation.

The meeting concluded with a shared evaluation. Participants expressed gratitude to the Abbot General for the invitation to participate and to the community of Valserena for their warm hospitality. Many noted the joyful and fraternal atmosphere that permeated the gathering. The opportunity to work, pray, and spend time together was deeply appreciated, as was the chance to listen to one another and to build stronger connections among Secretaries for Formation from all over the world. The meeting was described as fruitful, serious, and enriching, and left everyone with a greater sense of unity and shared mission.



NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

Meeting of Formators

ORIENS
Japanese
sub-region
Fr. David
(Spencer/Nasu)



Twelve participants from all seven monasteries of the Oriens Japanese sub-region gathered at Nasu Monastery from May 19th to the 23rd (2025).

Topics discussed:

- Use of the internet in the novitiate/a means for Vietnamese sisters to communicate with their families in their home country
- Current status of the novitiate at each monastery and formation initiatives
- Difficulty of formation when there is only one person in formation
- What is the content of the novitiate program?
- The challenges in formation for non-Japanese candidates
- Sharing experiences of various Vocation Promotion Projects. Initiatives to introduce our Order to people who are interested in religious life
- When new candidates are admitted after a long period of no candidates, how will the age gap affect their formation?
- Exploring the possibility of holding common learning/fellowship sessions for simply professed in Japan
- Explore the possibility of holding formation courses including online for candidates at the Oriens Region or sub-regional level in Japan.
- Maintaining hope for the future even with a lack of applicants
- Sharing current state of our prayer in light of the Abbot General's circular letter.
- Some reflections concerning the Ratio.

Number of those currently undergoing formation as of May 2025:

- Postulants: 4
- Novices: 3
- Simply Professed: 6

Discussion

A questionnaire was distributed before this 2025 Japanese sub-regional Formators Meeting, and it was decided that no lecturer would be invited; instead, the participants wanted to share their experiences by meeting in discussions.

A summary of the discussion on the various topics can be found in the appendix titled 'ORIENS – Meeting of Formators'.

Meeting of Formators
All monastic life is a school of prayer

REM

Sr. Fatima
(Valserena)



From June 30 to July 5, 2025, the meeting of Italian Formators took place at the Monastery of Our Lady of Saint Joseph in Vitorchiano, which this year, in addition to being a Jubilee Church, also commemorates 150 years since its foundation (San Vito 1875 – Vitorchiano 2025). The summer heat did not prevent the many participants—Trappists, Benedictines, Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Augustinians, Discalced Carmelites, and, as special guests, two Sisters of the Incarnate Word—from reaching the monastery, happy to

reunite in this Jubilee year and to experience the meeting in a spirit of prayer, gratitude, and a shared desire to work together in formation.

After an initial moment of welcoming the new participants, presenting the group, the theme, and the program, we welcomed Father Fernando Rivas (Dean of the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Athenaeum Sant'Anselmo and Coordinator of the Monastic Institute), guest speaker, and Mother Monica Della Volpe, who moderated the dialogues. Over the following two days, Father Fernando authoritatively and wisely presented the theme of **prayer as the unifying element of the entire life of the monastery**, through four conferences. After each talk, discussions were held, skilfully moderated by Mother Monica with her remarkable monastic experience, for which we are deeply grateful. Father Fernando himself also took part in the dialogues, enriching them with further insights.

In the **first conference**, Father Fernando explained how all aspects of our lives are sacramental realities connected to the dimension of prayer. He invited us to rediscover, together with novices, the meaning of everything we live, to help them gradually enter into a life of prayer. A filial prayer, capable of compunction (the heart of prayer), which awakens all the spiritual senses and leads to the fullness of Christ's charity in us.

In the **second conference**, he spoke of prayer as a response to all that the Lord places before us in life. In facing this reality, we can choose either to give thanks (the quintessential prayer of Christ) or to grumble. Complaint, he said, must open up and become dialogue with God—in other words, compunction: weeping before God.

In the **third conference**, he described the relational and cultic dimension of prayer—that is, of offering. Through our prayer, we enter into Christ's own prayer, the eternal dialogue between Father and Son in the Holy Spirit. Monastics go to choir not to sing beautifully but to offer body and soul—the material sacrifice of life. This offering is the act of acknowledging that all is given by God. In this offering, Christ lives and prays in us, offering our lives to the Father.

In the **fourth and final conference**, he spoke about the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer—He who cries out “Abba, Father,” who guides us and works within us to help us grow, if we recognize and accept Him, even in times of trial (experiences of death and resurrection often found in the Psalms). The voice of the Holy Spirit is recognized in Scripture, in personal experience, and in the examination of conscience, which allows us to remember God. The presence of God is a constant in the monastic tradition and has three sources: God Himself; the deceased—both saints and non-saints—who accompany and guide us; and the angels who watch over us. This is a weaving together of the visible and invisible worlds—a reality that is also reflected in our earthly liturgical celebrations (the Divine Office, the Eucharist), through which we are admitted into the heavenly liturgy, a liturgy celebrated by “Christ in His entirety,” which includes everyone.

On **July 3 and 4**, several Trappist sisters and brothers presented short reflections followed by pastoral discussions, well-coordinated and enriched by Mother Monica's own experience in formation, and complementing the themes presented by Father Fernando Rivas.

- **Sr. Alba** of Vitorchiano spoke about *The Recovery of Awareness*
- **Fr. Giovanni** from Boschi on *Lectio Divina: A Sacrament of the Knowledge of God*

- **Br. Michele** from Frattocchie read the contribution of **Dom Loris**, titled *A Little Praise of Daily Eucharist*
- **Sr. Valeria** from Valserena spoke on *The Theological Value of Fraternity: Challenges and Formative Potential*

The meeting concluded with an evaluation and planning session for the coming year, and with everyone's heartfelt thanks.

OCSO CONSTITUTIONS Course for Juniors and Young Professed

REMILA
Sr. Yohana
(Humocaro)



From June 27 to July 7, 2025, a course on “OCSO CONSTITUTIONS” was held at the Monastery of Our Lady of Boa Vista in Brazil for all juniors and young professed of REMILA. The lecturer was Dom Juan José, Abbot of San Isidro.

The objectives of the course focused on gaining a deeper and fuller understanding of our Constitutions and proper law; fostering the well-being of our communities and their members; and cultivating a greater love for the Order by growing in cooperation and pastoral support.

The dynamics of the classes included guided and shared reading of the Constitutions, moments of personal study, teamwork, plenary sessions, and a final evaluation. Our Constitutions, as proper law, are based on their heritage, nature, and purpose; hence the

importance of living them in harmonious development with the founders' intention and purpose.

What is our purpose as an Order? What is it and what is it for? What are the means to live it out? The Constitutions are an answer to these questions: they express, safeguard, and encourage this way of life so that it can be lived to the full. This highlights the fundamental importance of knowing them, reading them, and rereading them in the light of our daily lived experiences.

During the course, each evening after dinner, we had the opportunity to listen to the representatives of the various communities: Jacona and El Encuentro in Mexico; Jarabacoa in the Dominican Republic; Humocaro in Venezuela; El Rosal in Colombia; Boa Vista and Novo Mundo in Brazil; Paraíso in Ecuador; Sorá in Panama; Quilvo and Miraflores in Chile; Azul and Hinojo in Argentina. This allowed us to learn more about the realities of each monastery.

We also had the opportunity to visit the Monastery of Novo Mundo and, in addition to the Eucharist, to share a fraternal day with our brothers.

We wish to highlight the fraternal, friendly, relaxed, and open spirit of all participants, as well as the profound joy we experienced in getting to know and share with one another for the first time. We sincerely thank REMILA for its generous support and express our common desire to hold a new course on the OCSO Liturgical Ritual. Finally, we extend our gratitude to the community of Boa Vista for their warm hospitality and to Fr. Juan José for his dynamic and motivating way of conveying the course.