



Secrétariat Central à la Formation - ocso -

Abbaye Notre-Dame du Val d'Igny, August 31 2018.

## Newsletter 18

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

### Region RAFMA:

#### [Formation session for novices, at the Benedictine monastery of Tororo in Uganda:](#)

Butende and Victoria novitiates were present, with their master and mistress of novices, at a one week session at the monastery of Christ - King in Tororo, Uganda. The session was organized by BECIKU (*Benedictine Cistercian Kenya Uganda*), 10-June 15, 2018.



Among 20 young monks and nuns who took part in this session, there was a postulant, a novice and two temporary professed Sisters from Butende, as well as two novices from Victoria. The session was chaired by Brother Jean-Baptiste Tigoni (osb). Mother Scholastica (osb) of Tororo spoke on four topics: *The Call to monastic life, Conversion of life, Monastic life and community, Work and prayer*. S. Mary Annie presented to the group *The Spirituality of work*.

See **Annex 1**: Report by Sister Elizabeth from Butende, RSF of the RAFMA (7 pages, with photos, in English).

### Region NED:

#### [Report VONK-session Westmalle 15 till 20 April 2018:](#)

The second session of the third series about the vow: *Monastic conversion, related to Church and World*, took place at Westmalle and was introduced Dom Alberic of Schiermonnikoog and M. Trees of Klaarland. The first two days of the session Dom Alberic worked strongly on the level of the experiential, centered on the theme 'church'. For instance he invited the participants to choose a place in the 'space of the church' at which the entrance of the conference room was signed with a big question mark and the front of the room with an exclamation mark. After some time of reflection he asked the participants what had inspired them to settle down at that particular place. What we heard was surprising and illuminating. About the creed he made each one say aloud a sentence from the creed and reflect if we could say it wholeheartedly, etc. At the evaluation it appeared that some had found it difficult, for others it was an eye-opener. There was also a feeling that people desired more "lecture". The small syllabus made by Dom

Alberic , but which he didn't treat explicitly, is very valuable and gives a lot of information from ecclesial documents (a.o. The Catechism, New Wine in new Wineskins) and much reference to solid literature.

M. Trees took care of the Wednesday morning and Thursday by highlighting Monastic Behavior in the form of paradoxes. Some of the paradoxes: desire and moderateness; enjoying and bearing lack; hidden life and light on the standard; interiority and availability; order and renewal; integrity and fragility; individuality and community; freedom and responsibility, etc. This were rather formal lectures and because of the abundance of material there was no occasion to pose questions or exchange about the lessons. Here also some appreciated it much, others missed the interaction. So there has been something for everyone in this session.



24 participants: 6 nuns: 2 osb (1 novice and one temp. professed) and 4 oco (3 novices, 1 temp.prof); 18 monks: 9 osb (4 novices, 5 temp.prof) and 9 oco (4 novices, 5 temp.prof).

Wednesday afternoon a firm walk was organized. Wednesday evening the film 'Departures' was shown. A beautiful movie, playing in Japan was well appreciated.

(Report by Sister Benedict from Arnhem, RSF of the NED)

## Canadian Region:

### [Session on the shroud of Turin:](#)

The Abbey of Calvary, organizes from 25 to 27 September, with Professor Barric Schwartz, from Colorado, a session that will focus *The Shroud of Turin*.

## French speaking Regions:

### [Symposium on William of St-Thierry:](#)

Newsletter 15 November 2017, had announced the meeting, which took place in Reims (France) 4 to 7 June 2018.

The Conference proceedings will be published in *Cîteaux Commentarii* 2019. See in **Annex 2**: excerpts from the detailed program (one page, in French) and in **Annex 3**: an official report (3 pages, in French).

### [A proposal of calligraphy:](#)

Newsletter 16 had referred to the calligraphy and illumination formation courses offered, last year, in the Abbey of Kergonan, in France. Only the formation in illumination, offered by Caecilia Bernier had been presented so.

Now Jacqueline Lécrivain comes to propose the conditions for a formation in calligraphy. The [www.moitaplume.bzh](http://www.moitaplume.bzh) site presents both the artist and some of her achievements.

### Session for Italian language formators:

From 9 to 14 April 2018 a session for formators from different monasteries of Italy held in Subiaco. The theme of the meeting was: *Does the Rule of St. Benedict meet the demands of today's youth?* Father Loris Maria of Frattocchie, the new Secretary of the Region, offer us large shares.

Four lectures by Dom Guillaume: (text in **Annex 4**:21 pages, in Italian)

1. *The Foundation of monastic life;*
2. *Monastic life is a struggle against the passions for spiritual progress...;*
3. *Conversatio Morum;*
4. *The code of mercy.*

Among the contributions of the participants: (texts in **Annex 5**: 95 pages, in Italian)

- F. Amadeo de Prad'Mill: *To perfection. Notes for a spiritual journey*, p. 3-28;
- S. Maria Francesca de Valserena: *Young people and the Church, youth and RB*, p. 66-82;
- S. Marita de Fons Pacis: *Giovanu' in Siria*, p. 83-87;
- Srs Alba et Giovanna de Vitorchiano: *RB 58, 6-7*, p. 88-95.
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### Spanish Region:

#### Formation for novice Directors:

As novice directors course was held from 25 to 29 June, at the Abbey of Montserrat (Barcelona). This course is held every two years and, this time, the Benedictine Brothers were our hosts. The participants were twenty-four, of whom five of the Benedictine Order.

The speaker was the Jesuit Carlos Domínguez Morano, doctor in theology, philosophy, education sciences and a degree in psychology, Professor of the University of Granada, where he taught subjects of psychology, expert on the subject of psychoanalysis and its contribution to the spiritual dimension, psychotherapist and noted author of several books on these subjects.

The course had as its general theme: *Listening in spiritual accompaniment*. The rapporteur developed the following points: (a) *spiritual and psychological accompaniment: similarities and differences*; (b) *listening: authenticity and empathy*; (c) *transference and countertransference*; (d) *personal maturation process*; (e) *monitoring and analysis of particular cases*. Mornings were dedicated to theoretical exposure and evenings to work in groups, where we worked on real cases and shared the implications of these cases had about ourselves, always under the approach of the inner work of the companion.

The positive evaluation of the course, both the quality of the communications of the rapporteur, as also the fraternal climate, confidence and openness, we have experienced in the work of groups was unanimous. Likewise,



participants expressed their gratitude for the warm welcome of the Benedictine Brothers of Montserrat, attentive to every detail to make us feel at home.

(Report by Father Carlos Maria from Sobrado, RSF of the RE)

## Region of the Isles:

### Junior Course 2018: 29<sup>th</sup> May to 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018

A week-long seminar given by Fr Michael Casey ocsa was greatly appreciated by the 20 participants at this year's Region of the Isles junior course at Caldey Abbey from 29<sup>th</sup> May to 6<sup>th</sup> June. Novices, Junior professed, and two recently solemnly professed monks and nuns from Nunraw, Mount St. Bernard, Whitland, Caldey, Portglanone, Glencairn and Tautra attended the course together with Bernardines from Hynning and Brownhill and two invited guests from Irish Dominican and Redemptoristine Contemplative Orders. Members of the Caldey community also attended the conferences.

The seminar was entitled: '*Monasticism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*'. An examination of the issues that must be addressed as we seek to continue our monastic way of life in a changing world was followed by proposals for a direction for renewal.

The opening note was one of caution: are we living in a narrow place of denial which leads only to death or are we willing to face the reality of our situation? We live in a period of rapid technological advancement, 'knowledge explosion', feminism, multiculturalism, globalisation, ecological crisis, secularization. An observation of Pope Francis lends further urgency to the point: 'We are living not so much in an epoch of change but in a change of epoch'. Analysing the social and cultural forces that are effecting monastic life today, Michael Casey asked: 'Do monastic institutions have the structures or mechanisms to make the radical moves that are demanded by the times in which we live?' While he advocates, amongst other things, deep and ongoing formation in our tradition by sustained, close reading and study of our primary monastic sources, he also insists on taking account of the signs of the times; 'We must remember that tradition is more like a verb than a noun; it is inherently progressive, demanding re-formation in every era.'

Renewal of monastic life is envisaged by Michael Casey as addressing four key areas; a type of *leadership* that gives rather than takes power, enabling growth of community members; *mysticism* as central to our life, *asceticism* as a means to personal integration, contemplative prayer and fraternal communion, and a balancing of respect for tradition and continuity with *adaption* to external changes and integration of new skills and training and clarifying and achieving the goal of our monastic life.

These ten conferences covered many more areas that cannot all be alluded to here that benefited our brothers and sisters in initial formation; by the end of the week they certainly felt both challenged and empowered to seek to live a more authentic and integrated monastic life on their return to their monasteries. We are indebted to Fr Michael for sharing so much excellent material with us to help us to deepen our monastic vocation.

(Report by Sister Sarah from Glencairn, RSF of the Isles)

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**End of Novembre, 2018.**