

## **ORIENS REGIONAL MEETING 2019**



**OUR LADY OF THE PHILIPPINES ABBEY  
JORDAN, GUIMARAS**

**MAY 14-22, 2019**

**ORIENS REGIONAL MEETING 2019  
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

| <b>Community</b>  | <b>Superior</b>                        | <b>Delegate</b>            |
|-------------------|--|----------------------------|
| <b>PHARE</b>      | Dom Aloysius Yokuuchi Hiroshi          |                            |
| <b>LANTAO</b>     | Dom Paul Kao                           |                            |
| <b>RAWASENENG</b> | Fr. Julius Darwanto (Abbot's delegate) | Bro. Joseph Marie Cassant  |
| <b>TARRAWARA</b>  | Dom Steele Hartmann                    |                            |
| <b>GUIMARAS</b>   | Dom Gerard Ingusan                     | Bro. Moses                 |
| <b>OITA</b>       | Dom Raphael Shioya Hisashi             |                            |
| <b>LAMANABI</b>   | Dom Mikael Donald Santana              | Fr. Gabriel                |
| <b>SHUILI</b>     | Fr. Francis Lim                        |                            |
| <b>KURISUMALA</b> | Dom Sevanand Ennamprayil               |                            |
| <b>TENSHIEN</b>   | M. Cecilia Aoki                        |                            |
| <b>IMARI</b>      | M. Marie Raphaela Kuboki Youko         |                            |
| <b>NASU</b>       | M. Scholastica Okubo Kaori             |                            |
| <b>AJIMU</b>      | Sr. Gertrude Ikebe                     |                            |
| <b>GEDONO</b>     | M. Martha Driscoll                     | Sr. Miriam Mery Christantl |
| <b>SUJONG</b>     | M. Juliana Tatara Shigeko              | Sr. Gratia                 |
| <b>ROSARY</b>     | M. Goretti Qin                         | Sr. Bernadette             |
| <b>MATUTUM</b>    | M. Giovanna Garbelli                   | Sr. Leah Ponteras          |
| <b>KUNAMBETTA</b> | M. Mary Ann Kiriyanthan Devassy        |                            |
| <b>MACAU</b>      | M. Caterina Mazzarelli                 |                            |

**Absent Superiors:**

Kopua  
Nishinomiya

**From the Generalate:** Dom Anastasius Li, Abbot General's Council

**Secretary:** Sr. Anna Marie Ando, Matutum  
**Translator:** David Lavich (Japanese-English)

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## VARIOUS MATTERS AS REGARDS THE MEETING

- **Attendance**

Three superiors were absent: D. Gonzaga (Rawaseneng), D. Niko (Kopua) and M. Veronique (Nishinomiya).

- 1) D. Gonzaga sent a letter which was read by the facilitator in plenary. He appointed his prior, Fr. Julius Darwanto, to attend and to act on his behalf during the meeting.
- 2) D. Niko also wrote a letter which was likewise read in plenary.
- 3) Mo. Veronique of Nishinomiya. D. Raphael explained the circumstances regarding her absence as follows: Mo. Veronique had intended to come. She came as far as the airport but then she felt very ill and was unable to proceed. She apologized for her absence. And since everything happened at the last moment, there was no time to appoint a delegate. She sent her greeting and prayers for the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the meeting.

New members to the ORIENS region were introduced.

- 1) D. Sevanand, who was elected Abbot of Kurisumala last year. This is his first time to attend the Oriens meeting.
- 2) M. Raphaela, who was appointed superior *ad nutum* of Imari. She attended the meeting in 2008 as a delegate.
- 3) M. Scholastica, now the Abbess of Nasu. She attended the meeting in 2016 as a delegate.
- 4) M. Gertrude, of Ajimu, who has been known to everyone for many years. This is her first time to attend the meeting as Abbess.

We were blessed to have the presence of D. Anastasius from the Generalate.

The presence of the following delegates from the various communities was also acknowledged.

Bro. Moses (Guimaras), Fr. Gabriel (Rawaseneng), Sr. Miriam (Gedono), Sr. Gratia (Sujong), Sr. Bernadette (Rosary) and Sr. Leah (Matutum).

- **Procedures**

- 1) A team of three persons was proposed for preparing the votes: M. Cecilia, M. Martha and D. Steele.
- 2) Votes are to be taken by the raising of hands. The delegates as official representatives of their communities have the right to vote.

## DOM ANASTASIUS: FROM THE GENERALATE

- **Change of personnell in the generalate**

There are three new councilors, including D. Anastasius himself.

M. Regina who was elected for a 6-year term as councilor, was elected Abbess of Abakaliki. M. Rachel of Benin, Africa replaced her.

D. Santiago Maria of Azul, who was appointed as the 5<sup>th</sup> member of the council, was elected abbot of his own community. He left the Generalate in October last year.

D. Juan Jose, monk of San Isidro replaced him.

The three new councilors are still learning, both the Italian language and the work of a councilor to the Abbot-General.

There is also a new *cellarer* of the house, Fr. Javier, a monk of San Isidro.

Sr. Claire who has been the secretary for many years left the Generalate in March last year and was replaced by Sr. Marilucia from Quilvo.

Finally, Sr. Juliette, a French Benedictine nun is the new portress.

More than half of the persons in the Generalate are new in the house. It is a new community, trying to build up a community spirit. To do this they planned two outings at the beginning of this year: to Oviato and Viterbo. These two excursions gave them the opportunity to know one another better.

- D. Anastasius also read the message of the Abbot General for Oriens 2019. (Appendix I)

### **Other Matters**

- ***The Letters of Blessed Ma. Gabriella***

Fr. David presented his book on the Letters of Blessed Ma. Gabriella. It includes an Introduction by Maria Carpinello, the letters of Bl. Maria Gabriella to her mother, a letter to the priest who was her spiritual director and advised her to go to Grottaferrata, two letters to an Anglican prior and the notebooks of M. Pia Gullini. Also included in the book are an article by Sr. Ma. Paola Santachiara (Vitorchiano) on the relationship between Bl. Ma. Gabriella and her abbess M. Pia Gullini and an article by D. Mark Scott.

In relation to this, D. Raphael shared that the book of M. Martha on Bl. Ma. Gabriella, ***The Silent Herald of Unity***, has been translated into Japanese. The translation work was done by a friend of the monastery of Nasu. There was some initial discussion regarding this book in the Japanese subregion meeting but no decision has been made to publish it.

## **EVALUATION OF THE GC 2017**

### **Organization**

- 1) The half-day off was much appreciated in particular by the translators, interpreters and other helpers of the GC who were able to coordinate and catch up with pending work.
- 2) The number of invited guests was reduced at the last GC, it is better to keep it reduced.
- 3) It will be good to have most of the documents, (House Reports, Regional Reports etc...), available in digital format so that they can be downloaded by the capitulants before the beginning of the GC and also the documents, conferences given during the GC.
- 4) Can some of the conferences, for example, the Report on the Causes of the Saints, the Conferences of the Abbot General... be translated before the GC and copies given out beforehand in order to speed up the work of translation during the GC?

## **Liturgy**

- 1) A better method for the distribution of communion should be done.
- 2) Schola for the mass should not be on the stage but on the first pews down below, so as not to give the impression of a performance.
- 3) It was noted that the English Vespers was not well-attended. Perhaps there were so many commissions, both ad hoc and commissions of the Chapter that were holding their meetings at the same time for prayer. A better scheduling can facilitate attendance to Vespers in the preferred language.

## **Regional Report**

There was some discussion regarding the reading of the regional reports in the aula, as they take up quite a lot of time. Some opined that they are no longer necessary. Others suggested the need for guidelines so that the real situation of the region comes out.

## **Synthesis of the GC**

D. Anastasius elicited some comments regarding synthesis of the GC. The synthesis of the last GC was much appreciated. It was well-done and very useful to the communities as it included some points for further reflection. Some however expressed their desire that the synthesis be available within two weeks after the CG.

## **Conferences**

The conferences in the last GC were of great value. They served as inputs for the communities. Some regions proposed the revitalization of the order as a possible theme for the conferences. Does our region support this?

Some also proposed that young members of the Order give conferences at the GC. There was a question on the meaning of “young”, as it can refer both to biological age and/or monastic years.

A conference by D. Mauro Lepori at the next GC was suggested.

## **REGARDING OUR COMMUNITIES**

The following is a sharing of the communities which served as inputs or takeoff points for the topic on the Revitalization of the Order.

### **PHARE**

There are now 20 members in the community of Phare. Five people are living outside the monastery. Two are sick and infirm. Only 13 persons are actually living together the common life. We have to think how to live the monastic life as best we can with this so reduced number, how

to live in a monastery with large buildings with very few people. The source of water is also a problem. Up to the present we had an agreement with the government but recently there have been problems.

For three years now, no new candidates have joined the community. Despite our situation and problems, we are hopeful. Prior to this meeting, some men have expressed their desire of joining the community. This gives us hope that maybe by next year, we will have candidates.

## **TENSHIEN**

In order to form someone to take on the service of authority, some capable persons have been put in positions of responsibility so that their talents can be seen. During the 19 years of my service as abbess everything has been functioning well, even when I am not present. These capable persons, each in her own area, created initiatives for the next generation, for example, by making the community website, or thinking of new way of selling goods in our giftshop. On the other hand, the community is aging. We are 47: 16 are over 80. Except for one all these 16 can still move about. Their bodies are healthy but their minds are no longer clear, which makes them more difficult to manage. These sisters meet among themselves, once a month. They have a good relationship among themselves. They are the most lively and energetic group. Since the younger sisters are carrying out the responsibilities so the prioress and I spend more time with the older ones.

## **GEDONO**

Last year we lost one of the foundresses, Sr. Mariana. Though she was sick only two weeks prior to her death, it was a very beautiful time. She just wanted to go to heaven. A second beautiful experience for us was preparing for the dedication of our church. We didn't know that it would be an encompassing project. But it was a very beautiful time to prepare it – spiritually, materially. We had to renew the altar and put in new windows. In Indonesia, very rarely is a church dedicated. Because it is a Moslem country, we don't know that it will always be a church. Almost everyone present had never been to a dedication. It was very much like an evangelization. In order to prepare for it, we used a lot of St. Bernard's sermons on dedication; we had dialogues and we chose the things, the materials together. We had it on Jan.26 of this year.

Another thing, since the beginning we've always had a lot of snakes visiting us, but in the last few months we have been overwhelmed by snakes. We really don't know why; and many kinds of snakes they were too. We are experts in killing them so it's not really a big problem. We throw boiling water on them. In one 24hr period, 3 came inside my toilet, of different kinds.

## **ROSARY**

After the last GC, one solemn professed sister, received permission from the Abbot-General to transfer to the Carmelite order in Taiwan.

Last November, we celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our incorporation into the Order. It was a moment of grace, of learning more about the history, of being more grateful of our founding house.

We thank M. Martha and M. Caterina who helped a lot for the initial formation of the sisters who came to Gedono. After the celebration, we had a good community sharing. Because of the situation in China, many guests were not able to come.

Last December 3, two sisters made solemn profession. Two more juniors just came back from Gedono, they will make solemn profession this year or next year. We were also very happy for the visit of D. Anastasius who gave some talks to the community. Two sisters were sent to Gedono before the Holy Week, to learn more about the liturgy, so that we can improve our liturgy. Before this meeting, three sisters were sent to Matutum for ongoing formation. Since last GC, we have no new candidate. At the last visitation, a better use of the space was suggested. We added airconditioning in the dormitory, scriptorium and chapter room to make them more conducive for lectio and for sleeping. Prior to the last visitation, we were asked to make evaluation about the different work areas. As a result, we terminated the work of the pigeons since it was not a good source of income and it is not so advisable in such a limited space. Instead we used the space to enlarge the area for the liturgical vestments. The work of the vestments has been doing well lately.

Also at the suggestion of the last visitation, we had an outing last April. All the sisters were very happy about it.

## **MACAU**

At the end of the English subregion meeting last April 2018, almost all the participants visited our community. It was a short visit because of our limited space but very important for us, though it demanded a lot of preparation. It was a great joy to experience the region. Thank you to the ten brothers and sisters who visited us.

We have two newcomers, one postulant from Taiwan who entered last November 30 and a postulant-oblate who is Indonesian. With these two, we are now 10. Their presence has made significant changes in the community. The novitiate is now more dynamic. We can distribute the work better. We also created two new work sections. Now we make yogurt for the community and we started a vegetable garden. With the arrival of the postulant-oblate, we began intensive singing practice which improved a lot our singing of the divine office. We also give more attention to formation since we have 4 sisters in formation, and 6 solemn professed.

With great joy we participated in the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rosary and the dedication of the church of our mother house. We are increasingly rooted in our local church. Our bishop is always thinking of a better building to give us for a future monastery. Until now, we have no prospect for land so we have to make use of what we have the best way we can. In June, we will start to renovate the west wing of the house. It will provide two more cells for the community.



## **KUNAMBETTA**

Last year, there was a catastrophe in India, a typhoon and some floods and landslides. The Abbot of Scourmont, D. Damian, came for our regular visitation. He was touched by the community, its vitality, its deep journey towards a more and more authentic monastic life. M. Dominique brought sisters from the founding house in order to have experience of our culture. They were very happy with this experience. The reciprocity of the experience was very positive. At the community level, we are always committed to faith, hope and charity and we try to live with joy. We know more and more about our poverty and limitations, but we are also more determined to be attached to Christ and have more respect for others. At the level of formation, we have daily sharing on various topics. Whenever M. Dominique comes she also gives conferences. Even though we are only 5 sisters we strive to maintain a balance in work and liturgy.

## **KURISUMALA**

We celebrate the liturgy in the Syro-Malankara rite. It is very long. We get up at 3:30 and Vigils ends at 5:00, nonstop. We have a different rite for the Mass, the Indian rite. This is celebrated nowhere else in India but only in Kurisumala. We have a special permission to celebrate it there. We are 14 solemnly professed members, 1 novice and 1 postulant. Two of our monks are 81 years old, others are between 76 and 44. Our monastery is 60 years old. We programed to implement dialogue with other religions – Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Sufis. We already started with the Hindus, from June to December, we plan to do the same with the others. Bro. Augustine, who is our novice master, is preparing for ordination. Two brothers are doing their studies in theology, while another one is doing a diploma in liturgical music. In May 2018, there was the election of a new Abbot. It has been one year since I have been abbot. I have some problems and I would like to share them here. One problem is that the monks tell me, “You are only 7 years a monk so you don’t know anything. You were a parish priest.” Another problem is that when I assign a responsibility to a monk, they think it is their own private kingdom and that they don’t have to consult anybody about it. Also, for the last 17 years, there was no consultation. I started to have this practice of consultation, but now they want to be consulted about everything and everyone has to be consulted before a thing is done.

Professors come during the school break to give classes on canon law, and other topics to the community.

The Abbess of Soleilmont and the Abbot of Scourmont also visited us. We have one novice, a priest from a nearby diocese, he is 50 years old. Nobody is happy that he is doing this; neither his parents nor his fellow priests but he is very determined. I request your prayers for his perseverance.

## **TARRAWARA**

We are 14 monks, our average age is 49. Last year, just before Christmas, we had two funerals, one of our Irish founders. Just before Easter, a postulant joined us. In February, our novice got the habit and Simon made his first profession. In February last year, I did the visitation in

Kurisumala, followed by a return visit in May, for the election. In June last year, I did the visitation in Phare. In August, I did the visitation in Kopua. It was followed by a Benedictine Union meeting. In November last year, we had the first joint formation meeting with the Benedictine nuns. We also invite sisters of the Good Samaritan, to give those in formation some classes in Benedictine history. We also started a joint formation program with the nuns of Jamberoo, which happens every two years. D. Aloysius came for a visit. Just prior to this meeting, D. Sevanand came for his first visit to the Mother House. In November last year, I did the visitation in Jamberoo with Sr. Kathy of Redwoods. In Lent, this year, we began the Experientia program as a community exercise. We also began an exercise of coming out with a master plan for the monastery. Some additional accommodation for the guests will be part of this master plan. We have also signed up for Catholic Professional standards – of making places “child safe”. This means that we will be audited by the standards body in October, and every third year after that. In September this year, D. Peter of Guadalupe will come for our visitation. It was supposed to be D. Joseph of Snowmass. From here, I will go to Lantao to meet with my fellow commissioners for the Commission for the future for Lantao-Shuili.

## **GUIMARAS**

We start to feel the aging of the community. The average age is 59. More than half are senior, 60 years old and above. Within the last two months there was a drastic change in the health condition of the prior and the subprior. So now I am the only priest who functions normally. I decided to appoint a new prior and subprior last May 13, Bro. Kevin who turned 35 on the same day, is now the prior, and Bro. Inaki, the subprior. Hopefully, Bro. Kevin will be ordained deacon in October and priest next year. We have one postulant, and one novice. 3 members of the community, who are less than 60 are in Kopua. Bro. Raphael, who was also sent to Kopua returned since he couldn't stand the cold there.

## **LANTAO**

Lantao was very happy to host the Oriens subregion in our remodeled guesthouse in 2018. It coincided with the celebration of our 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with the new bishop. After mass, our Bishop met all the present superiors. He died last December. Please pray for his eternal rest. Hongkong diocese is waiting for a new bishop. At present, the former bishop is in charge.

Our eldest, Fr. Benedict, is 102 years old. We celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination last May 10. Our younger members, in their 30s, are novices. Our candidates are from Hongkong, Taiwan and mainland China. We have 3 juniors and 3 postulants. Two who are from mainland China stayed here in Guimaras, and have now returned to Hongkong. We still have two candidates here.

It is now the 3<sup>rd</sup> year since the establishment of the commission for the future for Lantao-Shuili. The commission did some research on the background of the two communities. They help us to see our situation and our reality. Last May, they suggested changing the status of Shuili from foundation to annex-house in order to simplify the structure and to combine the two

communities into one. We are very grateful for their help and for the increase of understanding between the two communities.

### **RAWASENENG**

Rawaseneng currently has 33 members, 21 solemnly professed, 8 in temporary vows and 4 novices, 2 aspirants, plus 1 member of the mother house who lives in Rawaseneng. 5 members (3 of them priests) are absent. The three priests were sent for further studies, and the other two are assisting the the mother house. Currently in Rawaseneng there are only 3 priests (the Abbot, the Prior and the Sub-prior). The Prior and the Sub-prior were just been ordained about a year ago.

The average age of the community is 47, the oldest member is 83 years old and the youngest is 24 years old. With such a large age range, the Rawaseneng community has a good dynamic of living together and hopefully it will never be a problem.

Living without fear of expressing the truth in love, in fraternal correction, in expressing the contents of the heart and opinions in dialogue will be more manifest when based on a life of strong contemplative prayer according to what the Father Immediate said on the occasion of his regular visitation in November 2018. Every brother should be more faithful in personal contemplative prayer, where the love of God will be stronger in silence, not an empty silence, but a loving one. Loyalty to personal contemplative prayer will also help the balance between prayer, work and lectio. Silence will ensure that in everything God will be glorified.

Since 2007 Rawaseneng has been struggling to obtain legal status of land ownership. At present the status of the Rawaseneng monastery's land is still in the form of Right of Use, while the coffee plantation land is in the form of Business Use Right that must be renewed every 25 years.

### **LAMANABI**

Now we are 14 members: 1 temporary professed, 1 novice and 1 postulant who will become a novice in July. One of our brothers has finished his theological studies in Yogyakarta. The other brother will finish at the end of May. Fr Gabriel is studying English here in Guimaras for one year and will finish in June. I would like to thank D. Gerard and the community of Guimaras for welcoming Fr. Gabriel.

There is a new paved road going to our monastery so we are now easily reachable. More people come to visit us and this affects our solitude. The visitors put our picture in Instagram and this also attracts other people to come. They come to us not for prayer but for picnic and “selfie”. There is now 24hour-electricity but very often the lights are off. We are grateful for the visit of D. David, also of D. Bernardus of Tilburg last November. Lamanabi, the city where the monastery is located became the twin city of Fatima, Portugal. The government has decided to make our monastery one of the pilgrimage sites. They asked us to make a Marian shrine so we are beginning to build it now with the help of the government.

## **SUJONG**

This year is the 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of our foundation. We are 28 nuns. The average age is 56. We began this year to receive new vocations. We have one novice and one postulant. We have many sisters who are over 50 years old. We feel that the community is aging. This also affects our economy, of which 60% depends on jam production. The orders of jam have decreased and the kind of work it involves has become more difficult. We have to start thinking of new possibilities or work since our income has gone down by 50%. To make up for this decrease, we are making cookies, icons, rosaries. These are things that the sisters can make easily. Another thing that helps our economy is the increasing number of people coming for retreats. We also started producing solar energy. We installed solar panels on the roof of the jam factory. We are self-supporting.

Many people come to participate in our liturgy since we are located on a pilgrimage route. We've had conferences by F. John-Baptiste from Phare on Cistercian history.

## **IMARI**

We are 38. One sister died lately. We received a new candidate. We just celebrated a solemn profession. We have two juniors and 2 novices. 15 sisters are over 50 years old. Some of these sisters can no longer work. Four sisters are over 90 and 100 years old. We have to care for them. Some sisters suffer from dementia or Alzheimer's disease but still live in community. Outside helpers come to stimulate them so that their disease does not progress fast.

M. Catharina resigned. So there was *sede vacante* for a time. The Father Immediate, Dom Roberto of Cardeña, appointed me as superior. We have difficulties to find a chaplain. Now an SVD Father accepted to be our chaplain. He was able to adapt very well to us and will stay with us for a long time. M. Catharina was asked by the FI to leave the community for a year; she went to England. She returned in March. D. Roberto came and made visitation in March. The appointed superior was asked to continue. We have not yet discussed how we feel or what we think about the situation of a delegated Father Immediate.

## **NASU**

Since the last time General Chapter, our numbers have not changed. We are 43 nuns. Each one is doing well. There are 40 solemn professed, 2 novices and 1 postulant, who will receive habit at the end of this month. Another postulant will enter in June. Two more will enter later this year. We are 12 Vietnamese and 31 Japanese. The average age is 63; the median age is 60. Since the last General Chapter, there has been no change in the members but there was a change of chaplain. Fr. David was away from the community for 9 years in Rome. Now he returned and we are very happy. We want to thank the community of Spencer for allowing him to serve as our chaplain. During his absence of 9 years, we did the best we could to find available priests from the diocese or other religious orders. It was the first time in our history that we didn't have a Trappist monk as chaplain. At first, we received help from Phare and after a Benedictine father came. The Catholic population in Japan is 0.4% - a very tiny minority, so there are very few priests.

We face a situation in which we cannot presume that there will be a priest to celebrate the Eucharist. Given this situation, we are extremely grateful that we have a priest from the Order. Last year, we had an abbatial election. This young new abbess is being helped a lot by the two former abbesses of the community - M. Angela and M. Agnes. We now have to think about changing various officials in the community – prior, subprior, cellarer, novice mistress, sacristan.

About the same time I was elected abbess, there were changes in the church hierarchy of our diocese. Our diocese was without a bishop for 5 years. So we were very happy to receive the new bishop. He was born in Japan but grew up in Argentina. To give you an idea of our diocese, it is composed of 10% Japanese, 90% foreigners (Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, from Brazil, and Peru). It's a very international diocese; we take this as a blessing.

## **OITA**

We become much smaller in number. We are now only 10. We had a brother, whom we considered fairly young, 64 years old who dropped dead without any warning. In Oita, we have a cemetery where 11 people are buried. So we have more people dead than alive! The Abbot-General told us don't let any more die. In a property adjacent to the monastery, the Moslems have obtained permission to bury their dead. According to Islam the dead cannot be cremated, they have to be buried, so they need some land to this purpose. Instead in Japan, 99% of those who die are cremated. At first the Moslems approached us to ask if they can bury their dead in our cemetery. We directed them to an adjacent property. It was the first time we had contact with Moslems and we were happy that it went well.

There is now a change in the population of Japan. The Japanese people are becoming fewer; and there is an influx of foreigners, and where we are in the island of Kyushu there the greatest population of Moslems in the country is located.

We are considering to accept a very fine Vietnamese candidate. He came this spring for an observership and we had a high impression of him. We haven't had any foreign member up to now. Our community had a discussion on whether we will receive foreign candidates. The decision was unanimous in favor of receiving this Vietnamese candidate.

## **AJIMU**

We are 20. Since the last General Chapter, two sisters have passed away. One of them was 90 and the other 95. Both of them were founders. Formerly D. Raphael spoke of the burial practice in Japan. To comply with this practice we decided to build a mausoleum where we put the cremated remains. We built it near the church to allow access to people who want to pray there. In 2017, three made Vietnamese sisters made solemn profession. Last October, four Vietnamese sisters received the habit. Our average age is now 40. Gradually, the older sisters have died. Now there are 12 Vietnamese and 8 Japanese. We have to make some repairs in the buildings; we have been there for 18 years now. The monastery was built during the winter and the cement didn't set right so we have to repair it now.

About the delegated Father Immediate, D. Roberto: he came in March and did a visitation. It was his first visitation in Japan. D. Aloysius came for our retreat. It was a very good experience. It stimulated us to think about our future and where we are going.

Regarding our chaplain, F. Marcel, he will be celebrating his 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. He is 90 years old now and we are very much edified by his dedication to celebrate the Mass. D. Charles former abbot of Bricquebec and D. Bernard, the apostolic commissary will attend this celebration. From this day, on June 28, we expect many people to visit and to congratulate him.

## **MATUTUM**

Since the last General Chapter, we made major repairs in the house: the floor of the church which had been eaten by the termites was changed. Then, we had to replace the external doors with security door and put some grilles after we were visited by burglars two years ago. The community was quite scared as it happened during the night of Palm Sunday. Right now, we are building storage for the cookies factory to store its raw materials and boxes for packaging. There will also be a bigger walk-in refrigerator in this storage building.

The community is now 34. We lost a junior. Two postulants came but left. Now, we have 4 novices and 3 juniors, one of which will make solemn profession in August. Last year, we had a very beautiful and meaningful visitation with M. Cecilia. It was our first experience of an abbess making the regular visitation. She encouraged us to deepen our contemplative dimension and silence. After the visitation, we did a lot of dialogues to review our guidelines on silence. We now have two glass doors, one to protect the area of the cloisters from the parlors and one to protect the 2<sup>nd</sup> cloister from the area of the novitiate. In our community at least 20 persons are between 30 to 45 years old, so there is a lot of vitality. Yet they took this suggestion of fostering silence very seriously, and they tell one other when they are too noisy. The atmosphere of silence has very much improved.

We had a very beautiful course on Isaac of Stella given by D. Elias of Gethsemani. We also started the program *Experientia* last January with the first unit. Then, in Lent we devoted two whole afternoons to study Unit 2 followed by 3 dialogues. The sharing was very honest and meaningful. Each sister spoke very freely about her monastic journey from the time of her entrance in the monastery until now. We felt that these dialogues united the community even more. Some of us had the beautiful experience of attending the dedication of the church of Gedono. We felt that the grace given to them was also pouring on us.

*Any information about Nishinomiya?*

D. Roberto of Cardeña is also their delegated FI but he did not have time to visit them yet. When he made the visitation in Ajimu, M. Veronique went to see him. She said she has a positive encounter with him and invited him to come to Nishinomiya as soon as he can. The Vietnamese in Nishinomiya are doing well. They have a similar problem of aging as in the other Japanese houses. They cooperate with Ajimu in terms of formation as they also have many Vietnamese. Nishinomiya also has the problem of a very large building. It was built as a state-of-the-art facility;

and the city has the right of claim to preserve its architecture. But M. Veronique feels the tremendous burden of its maintenance.

There are 38 sisters, 10 of which are Vietnamese.

## **ON THE ELECTION OF THE ABBOT-GENERAL**

### ***Qualities of the Abbot-General***

In their meeting a month ago the Japanese subregion reflected on Constitutions 83 as takeoff point for their discussion. D. Raphael presented the summary as follows:

Who is the abbot-general? Our Order consists of two branches, the monks and the nuns. The Abbot-General is the point of unity between these two branches. We have an order that is spread worldwide; he is the link of unity among all our communities. Our order enjoys 900 years of rich history; the abbot general has the responsibility to carry on the tradition according to the signs of the time. He must be a shepherd and able to impart a spiritual vitality. He must be a person with a facility for languages. A person who can see beyond where we are now and point to where we are heading. He should be able to collaborate with others and not only decide by himself. When Dom Bernardo retired, he wrote a letter to the Superiors of the Order, encouraging the love of Jesus and neighbor, the love for the Church and the Order.

The Abbot-General ought to be very interested in each culture present in the Order and how this can contribute to its enrichment.

A discussion on the qualities of an Abbot-General followed.

- The Order has many precarious communities, or communities who will be closing. The Abbot- General should be able to discern well these situations, and act with courage and determination.
- He should be familiar with Canon Law; this would help him to discern.
- He should address the Order regularly or on certain important occasions through circular/pastoral letters. He can ask the help of his councilors in order to do so if he finds this helpful.
- A person with openness to the Holy Spirit, with charismatic experience of the monastic life.
- A person with enough experience with the Order, especially one who has already helped the Order in some pastoral difficulties.
- A person with a clear vision of the charism, a testimony of our Charism in the culture. A person who will be able to carry the Order forward, not only through death (houses closing) but to where life is.
- A person who will be able to deal with problems of formation in places where houses are growing.

### ***On the procedure of electing the Abbot-General***

D. Anastasius reminded us how the election was done in 2008. It was held within the first week of the General Chapter. Right after the first meeting and introductions, the incumbent Abbot-

general presented his resignation. The capitulants went into the mixed commissions where there was a sharing about the qualities of an Abbot-General. And some possible names were mentioned. Then they went back to the aula and the names mentioned in the mixed commissions were listed. There were no further discussions or sharing about the candidates in the plenary session, nor were the candidates asked to say something. A half-day of prayer was given. Then, the actual election began. Voting was done in the aula. Each one wrote his/her vote on a piece of paper, put the vote in the ballot box and went out of the aula – like in any normal abbatial election. The capitulants then went back, after the votes are counted.

D. Raphael commented that now that we are a single Chapter, maybe the voting will maybe proceed more quickly.

From the discussion that followed emerged the following points:

*When should the election take place?* Some regions expressed that they wanted it halfway through the General Chapter unlike the previous election. The advantage of having it done at the beginning is that, it will facilitate making substitutions in case the person elected is a member of the coordinating commission.

*Discussion of candidates in commissions.* Is there still need for this as it has already been discussed in the regions? People will need to talk about it and it would be better to provide a venue for it. And in the commissions there will be opportunity to listen to what other regions think. The discussions have to take place in an atmosphere of real listening and not campaigning.

*Do we submit possible candidates to the Central Commission?* Most expressed that there is no need for this since the Central Commission decides only the procedure for the election.

## **THE COUNCIL OF THE ABBOT-GENERAL**

D. Anastasius was asked to share his experience of being member of the Abbot-General's council.

As a member of the council, one has to move to the Generalate and live there. One has to join the community there, even though it is a temporary one since there are always changes in the members. It is more healthy to consider it as a community rather than just an office.

There are council meetings twice a week except when the Abbot-General is away. The meetings tend to be rather long as there are many matters that have to be discussed and dealt with. Very often the meetings start with the canonical points – request for dispensation, special excommunication or other such matters that need to be presented to the Holy See. Then, the meeting moves on to visitation cards. Another reason why the meeting becomes long is the language difficulty. The official language is Italian. None of the members speak Italian very well, except for the Abbot-General. So, at times there is need for translation.

To prepare for the council meetings requires a lot of time. Since one has to read through documents written in a language that is not your own.

At times, the Abbot-General approaches the councilors individually for consultation or he asks them to represent him for some visits or handle certain matters.



Each of the councilor is also assigned to some house duty in the Generalate as superior of the house, sacristan, librarian, gardener.

Though there have been some proposals that councilors need not to live in Rome, in the Generalate, especially nowadays, with more advanced communication technologies, the councilors think that living together in the Generalate offers more physical and human support to the Abbot-General.

*How many councilors are to be elected in the next GC?*

D. Timothy and M. Daniel will be retiring. And D. Juan Jose will be finishing his term. We also have to elect a procurator-general among the council members. Also, we need to decide whether M. Rachel has a term of a full six years or she will just finish the term of M. Regina, whom she replaced.

*Do we want an age limit for the councilors?*

The Abbot-General has the age limit of 75 years old wherein he submits his resignation. Do we want the same for the Councilors? Currently, we don't specify an age limit. This is mostly due to the fact that there are very few young members of the Order eligible for the task. There is also the proposal to specify the maximum number of consecutive terms.

## ON COR ORANS

M. Giovanna introduced this matter by reading from the US Region and ISLES Region reports:

### ***Monastic Enclosure (presented by M. Cecilia)***

In *Cor Orans*, there are three types of enclosure: papal enclosure, constitutional enclosure and monastic enclosure. Our enclosure is monastic enclosure.<sup>1</sup> In 1994, Dom Bernardo gave a conference on "separation from the world". Separation from the world is not *fuga mundi*, escape from the world but a place for seeking the Lord. The monk leaves all to become closer to God. He seeks God. It's the same for a monk or a nun. One has to begin with the enclosure of the heart. After Vatican II, the Church was thinking of women empowerment. It is clear that what was applicable then is no longer applicable to the times we are living in now. We shouldn't have different regulations for monks and nuns. Until now, the nuns are under papal enclosure. There are many traditions in the contemplative life: Benedictine, Poor Clares, Carmelites... And to put all under the same umbrella doesn't work. It is only right that we choose what is more appropriate for our way of life. After *Vita Consecrata*, in 1999 *Sponsa Verbi* was published. This document only allows two forms of enclosure: papal or constitutional. #59 of *Vita Consecrata* instead allowed the monastic enclosure.

In the General Chapter of 2005, we formulated our Cst 29 on separation from the world. In *Cor Orans* the possibility for a monastic enclosure is clearly stated. But it is not really clear what it

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<sup>1</sup> CO #208. To the expressions papal cloister and constitutional cloister, known from the Code of Canon Law, St. John Paul II in the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Vita Consecrata*[123] added a third one, monastic cloister.

means. How much authority does the superior have? Does it mean that we now have the same “enclosure” as the monks?

### **Discussion/Comments:**

#### **Papal and Monastic Enclosure**

M. Giovanna shared that D. Richard Yeo, President of the Benedictine Congregation in England defined the monastic enclosure as a territorial enclosure, wherein the whole territory of the nuns, including the guesthouse and its farmlands, is considered the enclosure. In this way, a nun can go to the guesthouse without “going out” of the enclosure. But how about those entering the monastic territory, example, the guests, would that be considered entering the monastic enclosure?

- We are under papal enclosure, but, in reality, we don’t really observe its norms, for example, the writing of entries and exits in a book.

#### **On CST 29**

- In 1987, we proposed the same constitution for the monks and the nuns. When the constitutions were sent for approval by the Vatican, CST 29 for the nuns was not accepted. So the nuns are without the constitution. The mention in *Cor Orans* of monastic enclosure is like a hope that we would be able to do something that we have always wanted to do, and that is – to have the same constitutions for the monks and the nuns.

#### **Suggestion:**

- Since *Cor Orans* is a statute, it is a law for the nuns. We should ask the Law Commission to guide us in harmonizing the constitutions of the monks and the nuns. They know better, in terms of the law, where we are now in the order and how we can arrive at being one order with one constitution.

#### **On Formation**

##### **Questions**

The Order does not define aspirancy in the same way that *Cor Orans* does. What does aspirancy mean? When can we start counting the time of formation? In the Order, aspirants are not considered members of the community. We start counting the years of formation from the time of postulancy onwards.

*Cor Orans* prescribes at least 5 years of temporary profession whereas in the Order we can do solemn profession after 3 years of temporary vows. Does it mean that our sisters who are 3-years simple professed have to wait for 2 more years?

If one doesn't have all the prescribed years that *Cor Orans* specifies, does it invalidate the solemn profession?

Since *Cor Orans* is a law only for the nuns, does it mean that the monks can make solemn profession after 3 years as our Constitution specifies?

If the reason for the law is due to many requests for dispensation after solemn vows, isn't it that there are more requests coming from the monks than from the nuns?

Since it is clear that this statute on formation in *Cor Orans* presents many questions for our Order as it does not correspond to our Constitutions, we may:

- 1) Apply for a dispensation as written in the Final Disposition, "Individual monasteries must comply with this within one year of the publication of this Instruction, unless they have been legitimately dispensed."
- 2) Ask that the implementation of this statute be extended so that the Order has time to study and harmonize it with our Constitutions.

As it turned out however, the year given for compliance has ended as of May 2019. The law takes effect starting May 2019. In some religious Orders, however, they were advised not to apply the law to those who entered before May 2019.

Two regions of our Order, the Isles and the NED, suggested that the Order asks for a dispensation from **all** the requirements of *Cor Orans*, for the same reason that we asked for an exemption from the Federation statute – that we are one Order, the monks and the nuns follow the same Constitutions. During the waiting period for the granting of the dispensation, can we live according to our own laws? Do we want to bring this forward as a regional opinion to the Central Commission?

## **REVITALIZATION OF THE ORDER**

**(M. Martha)**

We find the word **revitalization** in various Commission reports on the regional reports. Besides talking about our precariousness and problems, there was some positivity, awareness that we were able to be witnesses in our weaknesses. If we talk about revitalization, we talk about resurrection. We pass through death in order to allow for new life to be born. At the last General Chapter we made progress in accepting and living the dying that was happening in our lives and in the Order. A Christian acceptance of death is not a sad experience but a painful mystery of waiting in faith for the coming of the Lord. Revitalization is not artificial optimism, that avoids reality or seeks artificial life-giving experiences but a deepening of our belief, our charism. It is to suffer with the suffering Church. It's important that we know all the problems, weaknesses, scandals, conflicts and sin of the universal Church in our times. And to suffer with the body of Christ at the foot of the cross with Mary in our common weakness. It is there that we meet the Lord - the gift of being called to offer our lives with Jesus in his lifegiving death, the very heart of our vocation. In our world that more and more live in a culture of death while refusing to think about death, we can witness to Christian faith and hope that is not just a vague wish or 'maybe' but a certitude of strength in weakness. One path of revitalization is welcoming members

coming from all levels of society. They don't speak the same language; they don't have so many basic attitudes of faith. We want to welcome them in their fragile identity and desire for life. For that, we need to understand the mindset and attitudes of the secular culture.

Several spoke yesterday of the need for silence and contemplative prayer.

Jean Vanier died last week at 90 and was buried yesterday. I was looking through some letters from him and found one which he wrote in 2007 when he was on retreat I was deeply touched and challenged by his words:

*“This monastery is sad because it is dying but they do not realize it. So they try to act as if it were alive. If they could but stand with Mary at the foot of the cross and wait for the resurrection... but they have lost the spirit of silence and prayer. They sing each vespers and lauds and all the rest. Their liturgies are good but the most important thing - the spirit of silence is no longer there.”*

These words are challenging because they don't necessarily refer to small, aging communities but to the need for a real deepening of our life. The silence of loving each other is not a silence that separates but rather a silent communion of faith, life and mission that easily becomes celebration. After the last GC, we had the grace of participating in an incredibly revitalizing event that continues even now. All the daughter houses and granddaughter houses of Blauvac were invited to celebrate their 200th anniversary of refoundation in France after the revolution. It turned out to be a big family reunion in which we celebrated together our roots by visiting the important places of our history together and getting to know each other, building relationships with people we've known for years at the Chapters but didn't realize we were related. We made decisions to continue the communion we had found and we exchange news of clothings, professions, feastdays, deaths etc. in a renewed sense of being an Order, a worldwide Order. Blauvac even publishes a calendar where we pray for one community every week. For us it has been an experience of having elders in the family who pray for and support us. For the older houses in France, it is an experience of celebrating new life in faraway communities. Celebrating life is so important.

The path has already been given to us in the Rule of St Benedict: the path of humility and obedience to the Father in and through the monastic Church

**D. Raphael:** In the Japanese subregion, we also spoke about revitalization. In the Japanese case, our roots come from Consolation in China. While the nuns trace their origins to Laval. Looking at the history of those two communities, they themselves passed through difficult times. From a tree that is almost dying, new shoots come out. In the last General Chapter, M. Caterina spoke about homeless communities. Laval and Consolation were also at one time homeless. The monastery in Macau is Our Lady star of Hope. Revitalization is a very mysterious work of providence. Something can happen in 100 years.

### **Suggestion:**

There is a need to reflect on our own community realities. It may be that the comment of Jean Vanier, external appearance without any depth, can well apply to us.

Why don't we do something like the experience of the filiation of Blauvac in the ORIENS? How can we have revitalization at the regional level?

1) How do we celebrate Dec 3, Oriens day, the feastday of our Region?

2) How do we celebrate the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Charter of Charity at the community and regional level as a way to remember the root and source of our Cistercian tradition?

### **Sharing on Revitalization in our Communities**

*- The community of Rawaseneng seems revitalized. Can the prior or delegate say something?*

**F. Yulius (RAWASENENG):** Every community has its own experience on revitalization because each community has its own resources and problems. The community who has more young members will have different problems compared to a community with more senior members. For the community of Rawaseneng, at least I think, there are two important key words: be faithful and be creative. We try to be faithful to our monastic roots and to our paschal dimension. We are invited to be creative to face contemporary challenges. To go back to our monastic roots means we live our contemplative monastic life as a witness to the people. The young people are the ones who will carry our life into the future so the challenge is transmission, formation.

*- Some communities seem to maintain their vitality. One of these is Nasu. Is the fact that there is a young, new abbess causing revitalization?*

**M. Scholastica (NASU):** This is actually before I entered the monastery so I don't know exactly. I would like to share something from the seniors. During their time, it seems for 10 years, nobody was entering. Then one came, then another came, then another. During that time one Vietnamese entered. The abbess realized that there were others like her. So she went to Vietnam. That was the first time that a foreigner entered our community. It was a real challenge that we had to speak about it. What helped was the wisdom of the seniors, the founders from Nishinomiya. The foundresses were very young women, in their 20s. They came with young ideas but aware that they could face any challenge whatever might come. It was the seniors who said to accept this challenge, go ahead. After the Vietnamese, I entered. I understood that the Vietnamese suffered a lot and we also could not understand them. The seniors never gave up on the idea to freely accept a challenge. Some of them have gone to heaven. But the foundation they left is still firm. I continue on the spirit that was given to me by the foundresses. They made a foundation that had a great impact on young people. Even just how they lived the life had a tremendous impact on young people. It made me also think that, someday I will be older, I want to leave something to the younger generation. This is my obligation: what I have received, I have to pass on to the younger ones.

**S. Bernadette (ROSARY):** In China, new life brings happiness to the family. To have the younger generation is to have the challenge to grow. The unity between the younger and senior

members is very important. The same is true for a community. The senior members have to be faithful to the monastic life to help the younger generation take root in the life. Sometimes I see a sister not yet old but without energy, without good zeal. How can I help them? They are not old but they are not interested in the community things and activities. It's like acedia. We should help the older members have good zeal.

**F. Mikael (LAMANABI):** Our revitalization will be seen two years from now. It will happen when the old seed will be buried and the new seed comes out. I hope the community will be ready to elect a new superior and make revitalization of the community.

**M. Juliana (SUJONG):** In September of last year, Mo. Cecilia visited us and interviewed all the sisters. She gave a conference afterwards. She said that for the revitalization of this community, two things are important: the spirit of faith and to be united around the superior. Following on that, I try to give my chapter talks on those two points. Where is the lack on these two points coming from – it may be coming from silence. We are weak in silence. We have guidelines for silence. But we have to fundamentally revise those guidelines. We broke into four groups to consider the revision of our life. We have met four times in the small groups and twice in plenary. We didn't speak about silence in theories but concretely. Do we speak with a loud voice? Do we go about with violence, slamming doors? Or for a nun who works with a young candidate, it is important not to speak about secular matters. The conclusions we have are posted in places where people can see. Another impetus for revitalization is the liturgy. Our Korean liturgy was becoming amplified, and we decided to simplify it. We're getting some professional help, in the nature of religious music. And we have increased the number of choir practices. We are following the advice of this sister who is giving the lessons. She comes for half day; we have half day choir practice. The cantors and the novices have an additional half day. In this way, we can be united around the liturgy. The liturgy can be a source of unity for us.

*Leah (MATUTUM): Through her chapter talks, Mother addresses things that are contrary to the life. They are not allowed to drag on. Charity also involves that we be attentive to one another though in different degrees. How is it that a situation of bitter zeal or bad zeal is allowed to continue?*

**M. Goretti (ROSARY):** In the case of Rosary, the community is not a normal foundation. In the General Chapter, the Abbot General mentioned that in the Order there are several personal projects, one of them is Rosary. The first generation didn't have a solid monastic formation and this has its effect on the second generation. Another reality has been that M. Teresa has been the superior since the beginning of her monastic life, she gave herself fully but she was exhausted after 26 years. She belonged to the 1<sup>st</sup> generation so also she didn't receive much monastic formation. That was why she didn't want to be reelected as the prioress. The fact the M. Teresa was no longer the superior was something new for the community; she was the superior since the beginning. It was a period of transition. To accept a new person is very big challenge for the community. The ongoing formation is also a challenge. What I have been trying to do is to have some dialogues, sharing, on our Cistercian monastic tradition in order to internalize the monastic formation. To internalize monastic formation concretely through dialogue. We put a lot of effort on the initial formation, sending them to Gedono, but for the ongoing formation, it is a challenge. Some of the sisters never had a real experience of monastic formation, because they were working in the hospital; To move to a new place is also an experience of formation for everyone. Everybody has to make decision for the monastic life without professional work in the hospital. It was an experience of purification for everyone.

Everybody had the desire to live the monastic life and not remain with the hospital but when the actual move came, it was difficult. To desire is different from the actual experience. For the novitiate, it was a positive experience, they are still full of enthusiasm for their vocation. But for the older ones, it was not easy. We have been trying to help each other, to seek mutual help through dialogue, to encourage openness with one another, and to be willing to receive help from every sister not only from the mistress or superior. I started a program of study on the Cistercian Fathers so that we can take root in the Cistercian charism. It is a richness for everybody. Revitalization really takes time and we cannot yet see the fruit.

**D. Raphael (OITA):** Maybe one reason for the bitter zeal is insecurity – both on the part of the superior and the senior members. The superior may lack the courage to correct. The senior members may be insecure that they have something to impart to the younger members.

**M. Raphaela (IMARI):** You call on me to speak about the revitalization of the community, but I'm not sure that we have, in fact been revitalized. M. Catharina came from Nasu in 2003. I came 5 years after her. To be honest with you, at times I myself ask about my own vocation if I can still continue with the monastic life. In 2000, there was a serious consideration of closing Imari. From what I heard the sisters were not aware of their situation. When M. Catharina went to Imari she didn't know if anything could be done with it. When she came there she thought to concentrate everything on the Rule and the Gospel. She built a new guesthouse which even the bishop thought was just a waste of time and money. M. Catharina said no, for the sake of the next generation, I want to build a new guesthouse. Of the scripture, she said that it has to enter your body not just your head. That's the formation I received. When I became superior, I have been concentrating on the scriptures especially the psalms. There are actually some novices who have memorized the entire psalms. Some of us who have gone to heaven left important jobs to do in the community. Why isn't there enough people for us to function for these important jobs? Many people are still in the initial formation, one cannot give them responsibility. Most people entering now need more time for formation.

I had a strong impression at the Sunday Mass here in Guimaras. Something is fundamentally different here. The people who are coming to our monastery today do not have a strong experience of the church. Most of them have only been baptized a short time. So in terms of formation, one has to begin with forming them in the Christian faith. Many young people have no experience of God as their father. It is true, that Imari has vocations but the reality is what I have just described. Revitalization is something that doesn't stop, we just have to continue.

**M. Giovanna (MATUTUM):** The example of the community of Rosary and Imari, of difficult beginnings and lack of initial formation, lack of internalization of the monastic life presents a question or a challenge for each one of our community. Acedia can be a monastic sickness that attacks all communities like a virus. I was very much struck by the sharing of M. Juliana on the spirit of faith and silence which is at the base of the monastic spirit. We have to ask ourselves, what to do about it? As for what M. Raphaela said, the candidates coming to our communities are very fragile not only at the level of faith but at the level of identity. In spite of what you saw today at mass, I don't know if D. Gerard agrees with this, the faith of candidates presenting themselves to our monastery is no longer strong as it was before. We have to spend a lot of time forming people.

*To Rawaseneng, what do you do concretely about the two points you mentioned?*

**F. Yulius:** On the 1<sup>st</sup> point of fidelity: on the liturgy, for so many years we used a 4-week cycle for the Divine Office. 8 years ago, our community went back to our Cistercian roots of the 2-week cycle. We also try to have some singing practice for the novices and juniors, according to the Gregorian style. Another example is for the manual labor. We try to let our neighbors, the villagers understand how important manual labor is for the monks. And that they can apply the same understanding of manual work to their life. In spite of the economic challenges, of presenting a burden for us, we have employed some of the villagers in our work units.

About creativity, D. Gonzaga besides giving conferences on Sundays on monastic life also invites speakers from our Order to speak to the community. He also invites speakers from our diocesan church especially from the Pontifical University in Yogyakarta on the study of Scriptures, the recent situation of Indonesian politics and also pontifical documents.

**B. Cassant:** I entered Rawaseneng in 2009. Then, there were more senior members than younger ones. I had my formation under Fr. Bavo. I can say that he is a strict person regarding the monastic rules. Now I am very grateful and thank him for that, because I can already understand what monastic life is. At present, the senior members in Rawaseneng are diminishing. There are more young members than seniors. I have come to realize it is time for me to give the example for them. It is not a simple matter but I try to do that. I think, example is important for us.

*We want to hear about revitalization in Tarrawara.*

**D. Steele (TARRAWARA):** One thing I'm kind of aware of is that our revitalization has also to do with the revitalization of our local church. If our local church is not vital then neither will our monasteries be. I tend to agree in what the others say that to believe is a way to continue. To believe in our life is our witness to the church. Essentially, monastic way is just the way of the Gospel. It is an invitation to the local church to follow the Gospel way. For myself, more than once in my monastic journey, I simply put my trust that this way will work, and persevere in it. The next thing that was useful to me was when I became a priest. I had to preach. I found preaching to be a vulnerable activity. In that, what I had to share was just what I got from my own lectio. Being forced to preach I was pushed even farther in doing lectio. I have become convinced that Lectio is really the essence of our life. In becoming abbot the same thing happens now in regard to the Rule. I am called to give to the brothers my understanding of the Rule. I had to be willing to share my understanding. In lots of ways, when you teach, preach, you get very little feedback. The most that you get will be "That was very nice, Father." It is a lonely task, but each is called to do that whether Abbot or monk, in their own way. Does it revitalize the monastery?

**F. Francis (SHUILI):** I attended a meeting of priests. I was asked what do we do? Like Moses on the mountain, we pray for you, 7 times a day. We are the spiritual powerhouse. We pray for your apostolate. Prayer is very important.

**M. Martha (GEDONO):** I agree with D. Francis that we should be a powerhouse of prayer and with D. Steele about believing in the monastic life as a way to God. We really have to understand the problems of the local and universal Church—the conflicts, the scandals. We are to be at the heart of the Church. We have to really believe that our Benedictine life is relevant. In the West, many people are seeing the RB as what modern Christians need. They have some insight on the gift of the Rule that we need to renew. We give a witness of Gospel life to the Church. If we are



really aware of our mission in the Church, that gives energy, revitalization, not only in praying but also in living as a community in a world where there is very little community. We have to try to grow in our love for one another—in our weakness, in our problems, in our sins. Before, the monastic life was seen as a higher form of life. Now, we need to present it as a way of conversion for poor sinners. Maybe the Lord is purifying us, the Order and the Church of all our pride. What revitalizes and invites people to come is when people see that “they love each other, they forgive each other.” Like the early church. . .

*Some suggestions regarding the sharing that transpired on revitalization:*

The discussion on revitalization was a very beautiful and rich sharing. It was suggested that it be brought to the Central Commission. How? We can formulate a vote presenting some key points of the discussions. They can be proposed as questions or topics for the writing of house reports.

### **ON REVISED CST 67**

**(D. Anastasius)**

IN the GC of 2017, three votes were taken pertaining to Cst 67: Vote 54, 55 and 56.<sup>2</sup>

In accord with these votes, the Law Commission had already drafted a revised text of Cst 67 and a new statute on the accompaniment of fragile communities.

What comments do we want to make on this? And do we accept this draft?

In the revised Cst 67, there is a change in the title, “accompaniment of fragile communities is added.” All the steps taken to help fragile communities are elaborated in the new statute. The reduced text of Cst 67 specifies two steps: special attention to communities with great fragility and if the fragility increases the procedure for the suppression of a community.

The role of the FI in the new statute is highly significant. There are four stages in this accompaniment of fragile communities: awareness of fragility, pastoral measures and collaboration, advanced fragility, special measures, and the process of suppression.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> stage, a superior is enjoined to look realistically at their situation. This is addressed to those communities who never wanted to talk about their reality or to avoid facing it, and as a

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<sup>2</sup> Vote 54: We ask the Law Commission to prepare a reduced text of CST 67 taking into account the suggestions of the 14 Commissions of the GC 2017.

Vote 55: We ask the Law Commission to prepare a new statute on the accompaniment of fragile communities taking into account the suggestions from the 14 Commissions of the GC 2017.

Vote 56: We ask that these two documents be given to the regions for study. Their reports will be given to the Central Commission 2019 and a final document will be composed by the Law Commission to be presented at the next General Chapter 2020.

result, they have become even more fragile. This statute focuses not only on suppression, but on helping the community to continue to live. This external help can come from the region, Father Immediate and others. We also find in it a list of signs that shows the community's fragility. This was made by Dom Bernardo Olivera during the GC of 2002. The GC of 2010 recommended that this list be put in the Statute. At the end of this first stage, the FI must have the courage to help the community to face their reality.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage, a number of ways are enumerated as possible measures to help the community which is in a situation of fragility.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage, we see something new to our Order – the GC, at the request of the FI may proceed to the suspension of the exercise of autonomy of the community. A monastic commissary is appointed by the GC...” This figure of a monastic commissary is something new. Since it is a monastic commissary not an apostolic one, the Order retains responsibility, it does not need to ask the approval of the Holy See. However the statute does not specify who the monastic commissary is. The FI continues to help the community. He advises the GC if autonomy can be given back. It is the GC who decides whether to lift or to continue the suspension.

It is in the 4<sup>th</sup> stage that the conventual chapter votes for suppression of the monastery. The GC were divided whether the vote should be absolute majority or 2/3 majority. Some thought that it should be 2/3 since the community must be respected but others said that a community in such a situation may not really be free to make a vote.

The 4<sup>th</sup> stage also states where the members of the community can go after suppression. The main principle is that a monk, without the need of a vote, has the right to go to the mother house, a nun to the founding house. Yet this can be questionable if the original motherhouse is already closed. Does this mean that they can go to the mother of the motherhouse?

The 4<sup>th</sup> stage closes with the provisions for the disposal of the property of the suppressed monastery. Up to now, the monastery itself decides how to dispose it. Some give part of the money to the Order, some to charity. Most think that here should be guidelines.

### **Discussion/Comments**

#### **On the Vote of the Conventual Chapter**

The vote of the Conventual Chapter, 2/3 majority, on the suppression of the monastery is in #17 of the new Statute.

*17. When the community has reached the awareness that it must be closed, the Father Immediate*

*invites the conventual chapter to express its acceptance of this reality through a vote. This vote requires an absolute majority.\* (\*or two-thirds majority)*

- 1) At this point, the conventual chapter has already been suppressed (#11). Isn't it a contradiction in terms to ask them to vote at this point since “the exercise of autonomy of the community” (#10) has already been suspended?
- 2) By the time the community gets to vote, a monastic commissary is already in place and several measures have already been taken.

- 3) The vote is in a statute. It can easily be dispensed with if the community is not able or does not make the vote.
- 4) At the GC, there was a consultative vote that the Conventual Chapter has to agree for suppression only with an absolute majority. (Vote 58) And the vote was accepted. Is this why the vote was put in a statute so that it will not require a change in the constitutions and the approval by the Holy See? But, Cst 67 is a whole new constitution so it has to be approved by the Holy See anyway.

The vote can be placed in:

#1 of Cst 67: “when the community experiences a situation of great fragility, which has been recognized by the community through a vote..”

#2 of Cst 67: “When, despite this help, a community remains in a situation of increasing and irreversible fragility, it will be necessary to proceed to its suppression...”

#8 of the Statute: 8. If, after all these efforts, the situation of fragility persists, the Father Immediate and/or the superior will bring the situation to the particular attention of the General Chapter...”

### ***Harmonization with Cor Orans***

Has the Law Commission aligned the revised Cst 67 and the new statute with Cor Orans#45<sup>3</sup>? This is the moment where we consider a monastic commissary.

### ***On the Authority of the Monastic Commissary***

- 1) If this monastic commissary is not a member of the Order, this commissary doesn't have a vote.
- 2) What is the relationship between the Father Immediate and the monastic commissary? Who has the power of decision?
- 3) If the monastic commissary is chosen by the GC, he has the authority of the GC. Does he have the preference of authority over the FI?

Given these questions, the region would like that the authority of the monastic commissary be clarified.

### ***On the Commissions for the Future***

In the statute, two commissions of the future are created. First by the General Chapter and then by the Father Immediate. In #9 of the Statute is stated that the commission for the future created by the GC takes care of the temporal goods of the monastery, so what does the monastic

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<sup>3</sup> CO #45: When the number of professed members of solemn vows reaches five, the community of said monastery loses the right to the election of its Superior. In this case, the Federal President is obliged to inform the Holy See in view of appointing the ad hoc commission[37] and whoever has the right to preside over the elective chapter, subject to authorization from the Holy See, will proceed to the appointment of an Administrator Superior, after having heard the members of the community individually.

commissary do? The statute does not stipulate that the work of commission for the future is suspended when the monastic commissary is appointed. The two seem to have overlapping responsibilities and this needs to be clarified.

### ***On the Father Immediate***

In the new statute, the Father Immediate is given a lot of authority regarding the suppression of a monastery. So much is entrusted to his discernment. Can the region be more involved?

Also, it would be very difficult for the Father Immediate who is in one continent and the daughterhouse in fragile situation who is in another to hold discussions- even with the help of Skype. This was the experience, for example of D. Steele with the situation of Kopua.

### ***Where do the members of a suppressed monastery go?***

Though the Statute addresses this question in some way in # 21-23, there are serious practical considerations. What if the community and the founding/mother house are in two different cultures and places. The members of the suppressed community will not find it easy to make such a move.

There is also the problem of immigration to be considered. It is difficult to obtain a visa to certain countries.

## ***The Ministry of the Delegated Father Immediate***

***(Vote 60<sup>4</sup>)***

At the last GC an ad hoc commission was created for the delegation of paternity for houses without Fathers Immediate. The following houses of the region shared their experience of this.

**D. Steele (TARRAWARA):** The delegated FI for Tarrawara (Dom Joseph of Snowmass) died before he ever got there. I had to organize for someone to come and do the visitation which will take place in September.

**D. Aloysius (PHARE):** Even before the GC, I had spoken with D. Steele to ask him to be our father immediate. And it has gone well. Last year, I asked D. Steele to come to my community for the regular visitation. My community was very grateful and satisfied with everything. Three months after the visitation, I went with a brother of my community to visit Tarrawara. And when I went there I received even more than I expected, they welcomed us. Before the GC next year, we are due for a visitation. And once again, I will ask D. Steele to come to my community. I expect that everything will go well so that at the next GC, we can officially change paternity.

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<sup>4</sup> Vote 60: We confide to the Fathers Immediate and to each superior concerned the suggestions of the ad hoc commission on the Father Immediate of the GC 2017 and we recommend their implementation.

**M. Raphaela (IMARI):** Our delegated FI is Dom Roberto, the abbot of Cardeña who came for the first time to visit us in February of last year in order to appoint a new superior. I understood that at the last GC, M. Cecilia got together with D. Olivera to discuss about an appropriate FI for the nuns in Japan. The community was surprised of their choice. However, I found him to be a very gracious person, and willing to cooperate. In March, he came for the regular visitation. He spoke to each sister. Each sister had a very good impression of him. But he was appointed only until the next GC. Bricquebec remains our motherhouse. The community is asking what will happen after the next GC, does it mean that we have to cut off all ties with Bricquebec? I told the sisters to wait until I would be back from the Oriens meeting. Until that situation is clarified, it's hard for some sisters in my community to agree to this arrangement.

**M. Scholastica (NASU):** Our experience is the same as that of Imari. However I have never been to a GC so I only heard about these arrangements. Last year, in February, we had an abbatial election. We were informed that D. Charles would not be able to come to the election, and that D. Roberto of Cardeña would come instead. And we know nothing of the community of Cardeña and nothing about D. Roberto. But I did understand beforehand that Bricquebec is becoming more and more fragile and that was why D. Roberto was delegated as FI. Our community was neutral, we did not think it good or bad but we just accepted it. D. Roberto came for the abbatial election. I got elected and that's how I got to know him. He has not made a regular visitation to our community yet. But when he came for the election, he interviewed all the sisters. We had the same impression as Imari, he listened very gently and carefully to everyone. We do have contact with him on a regular basis to inform him of events of the community, who will receive the habit soon, etc. He plans to come next year at the beginning of March for the regular visitation. At that time, my community will be able to think about it clearly. I hope to get more information about the relation between the mother house and the delegated FI so I can discuss it more with our community.

**M. Gertrude (AJIMU):** Meeting Dom Roberto was a very positive experience. I had a strong impression that he is a man of faith. He accepted what the GC gave to him in faith. He said that it took him by surprise that M. Cecilia and D. Bernardo thought of him. I am very thankful. He is delegated FI not only for one but for four monasteries. It's a lot of work to come once a year to visit these monasteries. He must have felt the burden since he was taking the place from Bricquebec, which had a very long history with the Japanese houses. I had the impression that he has pastoral experience. He also has 2 daughterhouses in Spain. Of course, the culture is different but I think he is used on how women conduct themselves. For example, he was very patient in listening to a sister who was going round and round. He is very gentle but he says what needs to be said very frankly. When he came, he immediately did his work and did not involve himself with other things. We experienced also his gifts when he gave conferences to the community. We experienced his wisdom in a refreshing way.

But at the next GC comes, we don't know yet what the implications are. Does this mean that Bricquebec is no longer our motherhouse? Do we have to change paternity? Can we continue with the delegated FI for a while? We are open to what the providence has in mind for our community.

### **Discussion/Comments:**

What the ad hoc commission did was to put people together, to make suggestions and to make a bilateral accord between the community who needs an FI and the one who is willing to do it. It is a free and mutual decision. The work of the delegated FI is for the 3 years leading to the next GC. It doesn't mean that the delegation is limited to 3 years. It can continue.

We are happy to note that the Japanese houses have a positive experience of the delegated FI but what about other houses? And if the communities with delegated FI have not yet decided to change paternity, this still leaves open the questions of who will be their FI. We recommend that an ad hoc commission be created at the beginning of the GC to evaluate or review the experience of the communities with delegated FI. They can present a report which can help the GC to evaluate the delegation of paternities and resolve some questions that these communities may have regarding their experience.

### **COMMON FUND for the ORDER**

Both subregions have discussed the working paper on the common fund for the Order in their respective subregional meetings. And both have asked the Central Commission to provide another working paper. Since no revised working paper has been drafted, the region remains with its request for a new working paper on the Common Fund for the Order.

### **REVITALIZATION OF THE REGION**

*How can we improve our collaboration in the region?*

*The Japanese subregion meets once a year but the Non-Japanese subregion only once between Chapters.*

**M. Martha:** I think we need more communication. Sometimes, one subregion has impressions about the other subregion without any real communication. We know the Japanese meet 3 times between Chapters, they meet each year. But I don't think we were really ever told about that, we just know of it. It's wonderful that you are united and meet often. Our subregion meeting is basically pastoral sharing about our communities for which we thought there is no need of taking or sending minutes. But we are also not communicating some news like who are there, etc. I think one thing that bothers our subregion is that the Japanese subregion has a meeting one month before the Regional Meeting of Oriens. It is difficult for us to understand that. It means that you have already talked about the agenda, but we haven't. I think if, for the sake of unity, the Japanese can avoid this meeting, we could all look at the things together at the Regional Meeting. When I spoke about revitalization, I mentioned what we were doing for the Vaise filiation. We communicate when there is a feastday, clothing, when there is an event. Why couldn't we do something like that in the region? To celebrate the events of our lives. We even did a little booklet with pictures of the communities. Blauvac made a calendar where we know who is celebrating what. So even when we are far away, we keep in touch. M. Goretti also mentioned about Oriens day and the 9<sup>th</sup> centenary of the Charter of Charity, do we do anything?

**M. Cecilia:** Until now, we have not been sending out our reports. The Japanese subregion is united, functions very well – whatever happens we can speak about it very openly. But it was not always like that. Before we were divided, now we are united. So we made a decision to meet once a year. The meeting was not to discuss great problems, but just to deepen the bond among us, now 19 years later, we function very well. In Tenshien, once a month we pray for every single community of the region. And if something happens in the region, we say a prayer intention and offer mass.

**M. Giovanna:** We used to prepare house reports for the regional meeting. But in 2004 we decided that we could not have pastoral sharing and work for the preparation of the GC in one week. So we decided to reserve the pastoral matters for subregional meetings and the preparation for the GC for regional meetings. At the last regional meeting, we shared a synthesis of our pastoral sharing. In these 3 years there were occurrences in which we were working a bit differently since we also talked about two topics in regard to the GC in our subregion : the evaluation of the GC, and the common fund. I apologize I didn't share about these things to the Japanese members. We also noticed that our subregional meeting is too near the GC to be able to prepare another house report for pastoral sharing. Yet I feel that pastoral sharing is important and should have some part in some way at the regional meeting. Other regions after sharing house reports, choose some points from the discussions for further reflection. Perhaps we can do house reports for the subregion and share the main points during the regional meeting.

**D. Raphael:** We discussed about the regional reports for the GC. If the GC will give a theme, the communities can give a summary of their house reports. The person writing the report for the subregion can send the report also to the other communities. We can start to do this in our next regional meeting in Assisi.

**M. Gertrude:** If this suggestion is taken, please keep the summaries of the house reports short - half-A4 size. Just give points in order to facilitate translation.

**M. Martha:** Since I wrote the reports, I can say that we always did like that except for the last time, when the Japanese didn't submit anything because they hadn't discussed the theme or written a summary.

**D. Raphael:** We have come to realize now that we were too much occupied with the problem of not having a FI, with the problem of Bricquebec.

**M. Gertrude:** Just a few months before the GC, we were informed about that – it's as if we had to give birth prematurely. We are sorry to have disturbed the process.

**M. Giovanna:** The situation of the Japanese was something real and had to be faced. What I was trying to propose is something to go forward, not just to be sorry about the past. I propose that we should prepare house reports for the subregional between Chapters. Other regions prepare house reports to be discussed at their regional meetings. Usually some points taken from their sharing on these house reports become an occasion to reflect on some important issues, thus fostering the unity among them.

**D. Aloysius:** To continue about what M. Cecilia was saying. In addition to meet once a year, we write 3 times a year a diary of events taking place in each monastery. This diary can be read by anybody in the subregion, especially we read it in the refectory. So everyone knows what is

happening in the subregion, not only the superiors. With the news of having D. Steele as our new FI, this diary was translated and sent to D. Steele too. We can have that diary translated and sent it to everybody in the region.

**M. Martha:** Japan already functions as a region, we don't. We don't speak the same language; we don't come from the same place. We have to learn from you. Only two of us are English speaking, its more a Non-Japanese speaking subregion. And we meet only once every 3 years, so we are not so able to speak so frankly and openly about our problems.

**M. Cecilia:** Yes we understand your difficulties. This is the beauty of the region, the richness of this particular region. We need to be patient with the situation that we have. We have to listen to one another even more. We have to understand that some people do not understand English well and there is no translation into all the languages.

**D. Steele:** On my part, we are very far away not only from the region but also from the Order. We are living in another part of the world. So, I for one appreciate what we have here. And as M. Cecilia said, we do have something that is helpful here.

*Suggestions for the revitalization of the region:*

- 1) Sharing on the subregional meetings
- 2) Share news of community events
- 3) How can we function better as a family with family celebrations? For example, how can we celebrate the 900th anniversary of the Charter of Charity?
- 4) Warm relationships can last in time, through small gestures that are repeated. Whatever we begin, we have to continue.

## **REGIONAL MATTERS**

- *Secretaries for Formation*  
Sr. Rosanna of Matutum ended her term as Secretary of Formation for the English-speaking subregion. Fr. Samuel of Tarawara was nominated and unanimously accepted to succeed her.  
The Japanese subregion elected D. David Lavich when M. Scholastica of Nasu, who was the secretary for formation for the Japanese subregion, was elected abbess. It was pointed out that this was not in accord with the Oriens procedure; as secretaries for formation are elected at the regional meeting. Dom Raphael apologized for this lapse in the procedure.  
D. David is formally nominated and unanimously accepted as the Secretary for Formation for the Japanese subregion.
- *Regional Secretary*  
The Japanese subregion requested that there be only one secretary for the Region. This proposition was unanimously accepted.  
Oriens Procedure 6.1 should now read as follows:



6.1. *The secretary chosen by the regional meeting serves for a period of six years. He/she attends the regional meeting to assist in the translation of texts and the preparation of the minutes and other documents. The English text of the minutes is the official report of the meeting.*

- *Dates*

Rawaseneng has generously accepted to host both the Regional Meeting of Superiors and the Regional Meeting of Formators. They are tentatively scheduled for February 16-24, 2022 and May, 18-26 2021, respectively.

### **ON ORIENS 2019 REGIONAL MEETING**

- Despite our distance, cultural and physical, and our diversity, in our voting we have a high degree of unanimity. Maybe this is due to our willingness to share with one other.

- Whenever Mother comes back from a meeting, she tells us very beautifully, understandably what happened. But being here, I felt dizzy - we were talking about laws and I knew nothing about laws. In spite of this I enjoyed everything, it opened my eyes to new horizons.

- I have a new experience. I realized that we are one family in the Cistercian Order. It is very easy to share our experience with one another and to grow in faith, love.

- I consider this as God's mysterious plan for me. Hearing each one's intervention really touched my heart. And I am very grateful to meet the members of this meeting.

- I consider coming here as a pure gift. I did not expect being chosen by the community and Mother. And hence as pure gift, I enjoyed everything. I tried also to participate in my own way. I cannot give more since it's my first time. In learning to swim, one doesn't have to go very deep but remain in the shore. Thank you very much for accepting me. One suggestion about the level of participation: I would like to see people to participate more.

- I am very happy to see the mothers and fathers and also the delegates. I have learned a lot from our meeting. I believe that the Holy Spirit is always with us. I am really happy to see you. I can see from your faces that you love your communities.

- The sharing among us was very rich. I received a lot of help when we spoke about revitalization. I acknowledged my own faults. But I am encouraged by the good spirits here. It's because I feel united with the region that I chose to stay with an FI from the region. I think it will strengthen my bonds with you more. With Tarrawarra as our Mother house, now I have a special relationship with Kurisumala and Kopua and Tenshien and Oita will be their cousins.

- I don't know how many times I have attended these meetings. But there was something very rich here. We heard many people speaking from whom we didn't hear before. And when I heard you speaking so frankly, I said ah, now, we really are one region. Now we really have a base to go on. I believe that it's the will of God for us. I am very confident that we can put our feet firmly in one ground and pray to one God.

- I am most grateful to hear of the good experience of the communities who have a delegated FI. We see the work of the Spirit. Thank you for all your goodness and kindness to me, and forgive me for all my faults.

- I thank everyone for the good organization of this meeting especially for the presentation of each topic by different participants and the discussion that followed. I'm also grateful for the help of the translators. I appreciated the food, the scheduling was relaxed, the laundry very quick, the service of the liturgy, the booklet already prepared for us.

- I could feel the atmosphere of communion and acceptance. Especially, I am grateful about the discussion on the revitalization of Oriens. It is clear that we are two different subregions, with different experiences and we are called to live the unity in diversity. Perhaps it is the gift we have from God.

- Accepting to attend this regional meeting, in patience, is already a celebration of the charter of charity.

- I hope that as one region we will be closer to one another and that in the subregion we will be more open.

- I realized the obstacles that the Order is facing. It turns out that we have been entrusted with a treasure, a gift. The diversity is something enriching us.

- If we didn't have translators here I wouldn't be able to attend.

- It impressed me how the Lord himself has been guiding us throughout this meeting. When we came back from the outing, there were many, big waves, I was afraid. But there was no doubt, the Lord was in the boat guiding us. It is a symbol of Lord's guiding us in this meeting.

*Some suggestions:*

- 1) I always heard the same people interacting. Perhaps it is better to encourage more people to participate in the discussions.
- 2) Beginning with the second day of the meeting, the Presidents asked people to present each topic to introduce the discussion. It will be a good approach in the future, to divide up the topics and ask different participants some months beforehand to prepare for their presentation/sharing. In this way we can share the burden of the meeting.
- 3) We have a very good air-conditioned conference room, but a very warm bedroom.

## VOTES FOR THE CENTRAL COMMISSION

Votes 1-18: 18 Superiors, 7 Delegates and 1 Councilor voted; TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES = 26

Votes 19-27: 18 Superiors, 6 Delegates and 1 Councilor voted; TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES = 25

- 1) We hope that most documents can be distributed in digital format.  
**Yes 25 No 0 Abstain 1 ACCEPTED**
  
- 2) Because of the need to translate many documents into Japanese, we ask that as many as possible be sent to be translated before the GC (Conferences of the Abbot General, other capitulants, report of the cause of saints, etc.)  
**Yes 26 No 0 Abstain 0 UNANIMOUS ACCEPTED**
  
- 3) We feel that we only need to hear Regional Report every two or three Chapters, that is, the next ones would be due in either 2023 or 2026.  
**Yes 18 No 7 Abstain 1 ACCEPTED**
  
- 4) If Regional Reports are decided on, there should be guidelines.  
**Yes 24 No 0 Abstain 2 ACCEPTED**
  
- 5) If Regional Reports are decided on, they can be distributed rather than read in the plenary session.  
**Yes 15 No 5 Abstain 6 ACCEPTED**
  
- 6) The synthesis of the GC is appreciated and should be continued, hopefully finished within 2 weeks after the GC.  
**Yes 26 No 0 Abstain 0 UNANIMOUS ACCEPTED**
  
- 7) A better method of distributing communion needs to be found.  
**Yes 25 No 0 Abstain 0 ACCEPTED**
  
- 8) It would be better if the schola for the mass was not on the stage but in the first rows down below to avoid giving the appearance of a performance.  
**Yes 23 No 0 Abstain 3 ACCEPTED**
  
- 9) There was a lack of attendance at the English language Vespers, perhaps due to ad hoc commissions at the same time? Scheduling should facilitate our prayer.  
**Yes 20 No 0 Abstain 6 ACCEPTED**
  
- 10) Conferences by invited speakers should be kept limited as at the last GC.  
**Yes 24 No 0 Abstain 2 ACCEPTED**

- 11) We ask for a conference by Dom Mauro Lepori.  
**Yes 25 No 0 Abstain 1 ACCEPTED**
- 12) We would like conferences to be given by some capitulants.  
**Yes 25 No 0 Abstain 1 ACCEPTED**
- 13) The conferences could be given by young members of the Order.  
**Yes 19 No 2 Abstain 5 ACCEPTED**
- 14) The conferences could be on revitalization.  
**Yes 24 No 0 Abstain 2 ACCEPTED**
- 15) We ask that the free half-day on every Sunday be continued.  
**Yes 25 No 0 Abstain 1 ACCEPTED**
- 16) We ask the Central Commission to provide questions to stimulate the writing of the House Reports and to encourage all communities to give a true picture of their community situation.  
**Yes 26 No 0 Abstain 0 UNANIMOUS ACCEPTED**
- 17) We desire that the presentation of the studies of the House Reports by the 14 Commissions be done consecutively and then followed immediately by discussion in the plenary session instead of being done at different times as happened at the last General Chapter.  
**Yes 23 No 0 Abstain 3 ACCEPTED**
- 18) We want everything to be done as it was in 2008 at the beginning of the GC.  
**Yes 21 No 0 Abstain 4 ACCEPTED**
- 19) We would like to have the option of electing an AG for a fixed term.  
**Yes 2 No 18 Abstain 5 REJECTED**
- 20) We wish to fix an upper age limit of 75 for the AG's Councillors.  
**Yes 8 No 14 Abstain 3 REJECTED**
- 21) We support and approve the recommendations on *Vultum Dei Quaerere* and *Cor Orans* produced by the Region of the Isles, in paragraphs 2 and 4 of their vote 3.1. (see full text below)  
**Yes 22 No 0 Abstain 3 ACCEPTED**

...

*We earnestly wish that there be one legislation for monks and nuns in the Order insofar as possible, and that no artificial divisions between us be introduced simply to respond to Cor Orans. The nuns of our Order are in a quite different*

situation than most other nuns worldwide, concern for whom prompted the Holy Father's attention in *Vultum Dei Quarere* and *Cor Orans*.

...

We recommend (a) revision of the nun's Constitutions C.13, C.62 and C.29 and (b) that we ask the Holy See for an exemption from all other requirements of *Cor Orans*. It is our understanding that, during the time of waiting in hope for the granting of this exemption, we can continue to live by our existing proper law.

- 22) We ask that an ad hoc commission be named at the beginning of the GC to review the experience of the delegation of paternities recommended by the GC of 2017 and to present a report to the Chapter.

**Yes 25 No 0 Abstain 0 UNANIMOUS ACCEPTED**

- 23) We would like the communities involved to reflect on their experience and give a written report to the ad hoc commission at the beginning of the chapter.

**Yes 25 No 0 Abstain 0 UNANIMOUS ACCEPTED**

- 24) We wish to modify C67.2 to read: "When, despite this help, a community remains in a situation of increasing fragility, and this is recognized by a vote of the community, it will be ..."

Or

We wish to modify #8 of the Statute to read: "If after all these efforts, the situation of fragility persists, the Father Immediate and/or the superior, with the consent of the community, ..."

**Yes 25 No 0 Abstain 0 UNANIMOUS ACCEPTED**

- 25) We wish to modify #10 of the Statute to read: "... suspension of the autonomy of the community. The General Chapter authorizes the Father Immediate to appoint a monastic commissary to oversee the care of the members..."

**Yes 25 No 0 Abstain 0 UNANIMOUS ACCEPTED**

- 26) We wish the law Commission to clarify:

A). What authority the monastic commissary has.

B). What is the monastic commissary's relationship with the Father Immediate.

C). In #10 of the Statute, What is the relationship between the monastic commissary and the commission of the future set up in #9 of the Statute. (They would seem to have overlapping responsibilities in regard to the management of the temporal goods of the monastery.)

**Yes 25 No 0 Abstain 0 UNANIMOUS ACCEPTED**

27) We wish to express our concern over the following:

1. The Father Immediate seems to be entrusted with great discretion in determining what triggers the next stage of the process, without any corresponding checks on the exercise of his discretion.
2. The proposed Constitution and Statute seem not to have been harmonized with *Cor Orans*, namely with CO #45: “When the number of professed members in solemn vows reaches five, the community of the said monastery loses the right to the election of its superior .”

Yes 25 No 0 Abstain 0

**UNANIMOUS ACCEPTED**

## APPENDIX I

### MESSAGE FROM THE ABBOT-GENERAL

14/05/2019

Dear Sisters and Brothers of Oriens, members of the regional meeting and all who serve it as interpreters, translators, secretaries and in providing the many others needs that go with regional meetings, thank you for your greetings passed on to me by Fr. Anastasius.

It seems to me that you are full of energy and in good form! That is a good way to be at the beginning of a meeting. Regional meetings can be a break perhaps from the pressures of life at home, the chance to see another community, to meet new faces and/or renew contacts and friendships already established; they can be a lot of work and put us before difference and diversity which can stimulate us or make us want to withdraw. But in this year of the 9th centenary of the Charter of Charity, I see regional meetings as a real and contemporary expression of the CC in its concern to be of service to others, rather than just being greedy and wanting to profit from them, but rather fired by a desire to care for souls and to help them to live the gift of vocation.

So in Chapter one it begins as follows: “ because we know fully well that all of us are servants, albeit useless servants of the one true King and Lord and Master, we don’t impose anything or seek our own advantage.... We are not greedy but we do wish to retain the care of souls... so that they can live according to this life-giving which is our vocation.”

I wish you good listening, honest speaking and caring hearts.

With a prayer and my good wishes and renewed thanks for yours,  
Fraternally,  
f. Eamon

Reading and thinking about the Charter of Charity at this time I offer you the following consideration:

Regional meetings are a contemporary expression of the Charter of Charity today. Monks and nuns (Abbots, abbesses, delegates) come together in the service of the communities of the Region and of the Order.