



The Abbot President's Circular Letter

November 2017

Union of American Benedictine Presidents: The Presidents of the American Congregations and Federations of monastic men and women met on May 15-16, 2017 at St. Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, MN. The meeting focused on a variety of common concerns and initiatives, including the allocation of proceeds from *RB1980*.

Union of Superiors General: Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B. joined other abbots president and superiors general at the 89th Assembly at the Salesianum in Rome, Italy from May 24-26, 2017. The focus of work during the assembly was preparation for the Synod on Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment, specifically the role of consecrated life in discernment by young people in their life choices. Several papers were given including, "Consecrated Life in an Intercultural World Today" by Father Arturo Sossa, S.J., and "Vocational Discernment in an Intercultural World," by Father Mark Weber, S.V.D. The following superiors offered responses: Father Matthew Vattamattam, C.F.M, Father Leocir Pessini, M.I., and Father Tesayae Gebresilaise, M.C.C.J. Abbot President Jeremias Schroeder, O.S.B. of the St. Ottilien Congregation served as the assembly moderator. Archbishop Jose Rodriguez Carballo, O.F.M., secretary to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life gave an update on upcoming initiatives of the dicastery, including...

1. Instruction on *Vultum Dei Quaerere*, apostolic constitution on cloistered nuns coming soon;
2. New instruction on Order of Virgins to clarify any confusion in various parts of the world on this vocation;
3. Letter to bishops on secular institutes to commemorate 70th anniversary of the apostolic constitution *Provida Mater Ecclesia* in 1947;
4. *Mutuae Relationes*, revised and updated by a mixed commission formed with several religious represented and publication by end of calendar year;
5. New instruction on administration of ecclesiastical goods based on international congress held in Rome in November 2016.
6. Two new congresses sponsored by the dicastery to be held on vocation formation/discernment in preparation for the Synod on Youth and another one on unity and diversity among the various forms of consecrated life.

Association of American Benedictine Colleges and Universities: Monastic superiors and academic leaders from our Benedictine Universities and Colleges met at St. John's Abbey and University from June 1-4, 2017 to mark the 25th anniversary of the association. Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B. gave the opening keynote address *Renewing the Vision of Benedictine Education: Reflections on the Teachings of Pope Francis for our Institutions*. Emeritus Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, O.S.B. concluded the conference with his address: *The Time of Study - an Integral Part of Our Human Development*. There were also a wide variety of concurrent workshop on education and pedagogy in the Benedictine Tradition. Link: <http://www.abcu.info/>

Benedictine High School Student Leadership Conference: Students from Benedictine high schools throughout the United States gathered at St. Benedict's Abbey and College, Atchison, Kansas for a leadership conference based on the *Rule of St. Benedict* from July 16-19, 2017. Ms. Molly Buccola of Woodside Priory School, Portola Valley, CA and Mr. Phil Baniewicz of Maur Hill-Mount Academy, Atchison, KS were the conference organizers. Dr. David Hadjuk of Delbarton School, Morristown, NJ organized the conference liturgies. Students participating in this national conference led their peers daily in *lectio divina*, a series of diverse workshops, lauds and compline. The students joined the monks of St. Benedict's Abbey for Vespers each day. In his role as President of the International Commission on Benedictine Education, Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B. celebrated the opening and closing Masses. Among the schools participating in this

leadership conference, sponsored by monasteries of our monastic Congregation: Benet Academy, Lisle IL, Delbarton School, Morristown NJ, Maur Hill-Mount Academy, Atchison KS, St. Bede Academy, Peru IL and St. Benedict's Prep, Newark, NJ.

Formation Convocation: Archabbot Douglas Nowicki, O.S.B and Prior Earl Henry, O.S.B. welcomed novice masters and formation directors of our monastic Congregation to St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA for a formation convocation from July 20-24, 2017. The convocation was one of the initiatives of the new mutual assistance committee established by the 52nd General Chapter. The purpose of this convocation was to develop a common ratio or program of studies for the novitiates in the monasteries of the Congregation. Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B. chaired the convocation and Brother Loughlan Sofield, S.T. served as its facilitator. All of the novice masters and/or formation directors of our monastic Congregation were in attendance. The convocation produced eight new syllabi and bibliographies for the novitiate programs of our monasteries. The many aspects of hospitality for this convocation were professionally managed by Father Chad Ficorilli, O.S.B. and the dedicated St. Vincent College staff. The participants included: Father Bernardo Geraldo Búrquez, O.S.B (Tepeyac), Prior Michael Calhoun, O.S.B. (Peru), Abbot Isaac Camacho, O.S.B. (St. Leo), Brother Kevin Coffey, O.S.B. (Lisle), Prior Boniface Copelin, O.S.B. (Shawnee), Father Elias Correa-Torres, O.S.B. (Belmont), Prior Mathias Durette, O.S.B. (Manchester), Father Albert Holtz, O.S.B. (Newark), Prior John Mary Lugenwa, O.S.B., (Richmond), Father John Meoska, O.S.B. (Collegetville), Abbot Austin Murphy, O.S.B. (Lisle), Father Warren Murrman, O.S.B. (Latrobe), Father Hilary O'Leary, O.S.B. (Morristown), Brother Aristides Pacheco Torres, O.S.B. (Humacao), Father Paul Paproski, O.S.B. (Muenster), Brother Alban Petesch, O.S.B. (Richardton), Brother Benedict Van Ginkel, O.S.B. (Muenster), Brother Nicolaus Wilson (Lacey).

Canonical Visitations: Emeritus Abbot Matthew Leavy, O.S.B. (Manchester) and Father Thomas Acklin, O.S.B. (Latrobe) conducted the quinquennial canonical visitation of the monastic community at St. Bede Abbey, Peru, IL from July 25-28, 2017. Abbot John Klassen, O.S.B. (Collegetville) and Father James Flint, O.S.B. (Lisle) conducted the quinquennial canonical visitation of the monastic community at Assumption Abbey, Richardton, ND from August 6-11, 2017. Abbot Lawrence Stasyszen, O.S.B. (Shawnee) and Prior Justin McCreedy, O.S.B. (Lacey) conducted the conducted the quinquennial canonical visitation of the monastic community at St. Andrew Abbey, Cleveland, OH from November 13-17, 2017.

Abbatial Election: The monastic chapter at Assumption Abbey in Richardton, ND, elected Father Daniel Maloney O.S.B. as the ninth abbot of the community on July 27, 2017. Abbot Daniel has had a distinguished career as professor of philosophy at the University of Mary in Bismarck, ND, and has also served the Benedictine Sisters at Annunciation Monastery, also in Bismarck, as their chaplain. Abbot Daniel succeeds Abbot Brian Wangler O.S.B. who died on May 25, 2017 after a courageous battle with cancer. Abbot President Elias Lorenzo OSB presided over and confirmed the election. Abbot Daniel Maloney, O.S.B. received the rite solemn abbatial blessing from the Most Rev. David Kagan, Bishop of Bismarck, at Assumption Abbey Church, Richardton, North Dakota. Among the many invited guests were Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B., Abbot Placid Solari, O.S.B. (Belmont) and Prior Bradley Jenniges, O.S.B. (Collegetville). *Ad multos annos!*

Conference of Major Superiors of Men: Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B., Abbot John Klassen, O.S.B. (Collegetville), Abbot Lawrence Stasyszen, O.S.B. (Shawnee) and Prior Jerome Borski, O.S.B. (Morristown) attended the annual assembly of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men from August 1-4, 2017 in Scottsdale, AZ. In the pre-assembly workshop on August 1, 2017, a panel offered important information on the formation and development of review boards envisioned by the *Instruments of Hope and Healing* and the USCCB's *Essential Norms*. During the assembly itself, the various presentations and discussions focused on the unique vocation of religious Brothers with the theme: *All Brothers, Mediators of God's Love*. Brother John Mark Falkenhain, O.S.B. from St. Meinrad Archabbey and Father James Heft, S.M. from the Institute for Advance Catholic Studies at the University of Southern California gave the keynote presentations.

Visitation Workshop: Abbot Richard Cronin, O.S.B. and Prior Jerome Borski, O.S.B. welcomed abbots and monks from our monastic Congregation to St. Mary's Abbey, Morristown, NJ for a workshop on canonical visitations from August 6-10, 2017. Workshop presenters included Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B., Father Daniel Ward, O.S.B. (Collegetown) and Dr. Mathias Hagovsky. The purpose of this workshop was to train a new generation of abbots and monks for this important service to the monasteries of our monastic Congregation. The workshop concluded with an optional visit to *The Cloisters*, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's medieval collection at Fort Tryon Park, New York. The many details of hospitality were carefully and successfully managed by Father Joseph Voltaggio, O.S.B. The participants included: Prior Boniface Copelin, O.S.B. (Shawnee), Father Elias Correa-Torres, O.S.B. (Belmont), Abbot Richard Cronin, O.S.B. (Morristown), Abbot Philip Davey, O.S.B. (Peru), Father Edward Seton Fittin, O.S.B. (Morristown), Prior Bradley Jenniges, O.S.B. (Collegetown), Father Augustine Kelly, O.S.B. (Manchester), Father Jonathan Licari, O.S.B. (Collegetown), Prior Justin McCreedy, O.S.B., (Lacey), Father Meinrad Miller, O.S.B. (Atchison), Abbot Austin Murphy, O.S.B. (Lisle), Father Michael Peterson, O.S.B. (Collegetown), Abbot Lawrence Stasyszen, O.S.B. (Shawnee), Brother Aelred Senna, O.S.B. (Collegetown), Father Michael Tidd, O.S.B. (Morristown), Brother Luke Turner, O.S.B. (Atchison), Father Peter Tynan, O.S.B. (Lacey), Brother Damian Whalen, O.S.B. (Shawnee).

Benedictine Confederation: At the request of Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, O.S.B. (Sant'Anselmo), Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B., Abbot President Jeremias Schröder, O.S.B. (St. Ottilien) and Brother Richard Oliver, O.S.B. (Collegetown) met at St. Mary's Abbey, Morristown, New Jersey on September 24-25, 2017 to develop a proposal to update and renew the Benedictine Confederation website, www.osb.org. A subsequent meeting was held at Sant'Anselmo in Rome on November 20, 2017.

Synod of Abbots President: Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, O.S.B. (Sant'Anselmo) convoked the annual synod of Abbots President at St. Meinrad Archabbey, Indiana from September 11-15, 2017. Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B. participated in this synod and Father Francisco Schulte, O.S.B. (Collegetown) served as one of the simultaneous translators. The Abbot Primate gave a presentation the pastoral role of leadership. The Abbots President heard reports from the Prior, Rector and Treasurer of Sant'Anselmo, the Benedictine Confederation's international university in Rome, Italy.

Mutual Assistance Committee The second meeting of this committee established by the last general chapter met at Saint Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe PA on July 22, 2017. The following monks, with the permission of their respective abbots, will serve on specific congregational committees. These committees will be collecting various resources to be posted and shared on the congregation website. **Communications Committee:** Brother Luke Devine, O.S.B. (Lacey), Brother Francis O.S.B. (Manchester), Brother Pascal Pautler, O.S.B. (Cullman); **Formation Committee:** Father Simon Baker, O.S.B. (Atchison), Prior Michael Calhoun, O.S.B. (Peru), Brother Kevin Coffey, O.S.B. (Lisle), Father John Meoska, O.S.B. (Collegetown), Father Elias Correa-Torres, O.S.B. (Collegetown); **Vocation Committee:** Brother Leven Harton, O.S.B. (Atchison), Father Canice McMullen, O.S.B. (Latrobe), Father Paul-Vincent Neibaur, O.S.B. (Collegetown), Father Paul Weckert, O.S.B. (Lacey), Brother Patrick Winbush, O.S.B. (Newark); **Liturgy Committee:** Father Augustine Kelly, O.S.B. (Manchester), Father Edward Seton Fittin, O.S.B. (Morristown), Brother Augustine Mallak, O.S.B. (Lisle), Father Meinrad Miller, O.S.B. (Atchison), Father Dunstan Moorse, O.S.B. (Collegetown), Brother Damian Whalen, O.S.B. (Shawnee); **Monastic Life Committee:** Father Boniface Hicks, O.S.B. (Latrobe), Brother Alban Petesch, O.S.B. (Richardton), Father Paul Paproski, O.S.B. (Muenster); Brother George Rumley, O.S.B. (Belmont); **Safe Environment Committee:** Abbot Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B. (Morristown), Father Roman Paur, O.S.B. (Collegetown), Mr. Jack Perry (Latrobe).

Annual Priors' Meeting: Abbot John Klassen, O.S.B. and Prior Bradley Jenniges, O.S.B. welcome claustral priors from our own monastic congregation and other American congregations to The St. John's Abbey Guesthouse on November 4-7, 2017. The topic of discussion was on leadership in the Rule and was led by Abbot John and Sister Michaela Hedican, O.S.B., St. Benedict's Monastery. Gratitude to Brother David

Klingeman, O.S.B., Father Joseph Feders, O.S.B. and Brother Isidore Glycer, O.S.B. for all the details of hospitality.

San Antonio Abad: Following Hurricane Maria, the houses of our own monastic Congregation as well as other Benedictine monasteries in the USA responded generously to the urgent need to rebuild and repair the school and monastery in Humacao, Puerto Rico. To date we have sent more than \$300,000.00 in aid to our confreres in Puerto Rico. Thank you for your generosity!!!

Prayers: Please remember in prayer Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland, O.S.B. who has recently been diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer found in malignant plasma cells. He has completed chemotherapy and is now being treated with medications and is doing well. This new health situation required a change in residence. He moved into Clement Manor, a senior living community sponsored by the School Sisters of St. Francis located in the Greenfield section of Milwaukee. The Abbot President visited him on October 9, 2017. His new contact info is as follows:

Clement Manor
9339 West Howard Ave
Greenfield, WI 53228

Fraternal Visits: Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B. made visits to the following monastic communities: May 1-5, 2017: Woodside Priory, Portola Valley, CA; May 7-12, 2017: St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Canada; May 14-17, 2017: St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, MN; June 1-4, 2017: St. John's Abbey, Collegeville MN; June 11 - July 12, 2017: San Jose Priory, Quetzaltenango Guatemala (Spanish school); July 16-19, 2017: St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, KS; July 20-24, 2017: St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA; July 24-28, 2017: Assumption Abbey, Richardton, ND; September 5-7, 2017: Mary Mother of the Church Abbey, Richmond, VA; September 21, 2017 Newark Abbey, Newark, NJ; October 16-23, 2017: Abadia del Tepeyac, Izcalli, Mexico; October 31-November 1, 2017: St. Bede Abbey, Peru, IL; November 2-4, 2017: St. Procopius Abbey, Lisle, IL; November 13-19, 2017: St. Andrew Abbey, Cleveland, OH.

Upcoming Events: Mark Your Calendars!

Annual Abbots' Workshop: February 2-6, 2018 at St. Joseph Abbey, St. Benedict, LA

Juniorate Conference: June 14-23, 2018 at St. Anselm Abbey, Manchester, NH

Benedictine Youth Day, requested by Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, O.S.B, as preparation for the synod on youth: June 16-17, 2018 at St. Anselm Abbey, Manchester, NH in conjunction with the juniorate conference.

Benedictine Leadership Institute, for lay educational leaders in secondary schools: June 25-29, 2018 at St. Procopius Abbey and Benedictine University, Lisle, IL.

Vocation Convocation: July 5-9, 2018 at St. Mary's Abbey, Morristown, NJ.

Benedictine Formation Workshop: July 18-21, 2018 at St. Mary's Abbey, Morristown, NJ.

53rd General Chapter: June 16-21, 2019 at St. Anselm Abbey, Manchester, NH.