



The Abbot President's Circular Letter

November 2018

Union of Superiors General: The 91st Assembly of the Union of Superiors General was held on November 21-23, 2018 at the Pauline conference center in Ariccia, one of the Castelli Romani towns of Rome, Italy. Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, O.S.B. (Sant'Anselmo) and Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B. were among the more than 100 participants. The assembly focused primarily on the implementation of the XV Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on *Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment* according to the various and diverse charisms of the religious institutes of men and societies of apostolic life in the Church. During the assembly, the Superiors General also elected a new executive council. Father Arturo Sosa, S.J. was elected President and Father Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R. was elected Vice-President. The assembly also elected additional members to this executive council with representation from among the various forms of consecrated life in the Church: canons regular, monastics, mendicants, clerics regular, brothers' institutes and societies of apostolic life. Abbot General Mauro Lepori, O.Cist. was elected to represent our monastic tradition.

Annual Financial Audits: The financial advisers of the Congregation met with the Abbot President's Council at St. Procopius Abbey in Lisle, Illinois on Nov 8-9, 2018 to review the annual certified audits of our monasteries and their sponsored apostolates. These advisers include Abbot Mark Cooper, O.S.B. (Manchester), Father Martin Bartle, O.S.B. (Latrobe), Father Isaiah Frederick, O.S.B. (Collegetown) and Father Michael Tidd, O.S.B. (Morristown), who serves as chairman. Joining them this year is also Mr. Daniel Meehan and Mr. Harry Haslam, the first two lay financial advisers. The President's Council continued its regular session through Saturday, November 10, 2018 with the ordinary business of the Congregation and preparations for the general chapter in June 2019. The councilors of the Congregation include Archabbot Douglas Nowicki, O.S.B. (Latrobe), Abbot Mark Cooper, O.S.B. (Manchester), Father Edward Mazich, O.S.B. (Latrobe), Father James Flint, O.S.B. (Lisle) and Father Michael Calhoun, O.S.B. (Peru), who serves as executive secretary.

Transfer Complete: Mt. Savior Monastery in Elmira, N.Y. has been in the process of discernment in order to transfer from our monastic Congregation into the Subiaco Cassinese Congregation. That process began in 2014 with the English Province of that monastic Congregation. Abbot President Guillermo León Arboleda Tamayo, O.S.B. has communicated that the discernment and transfer process is complete and that his council has formally and canonically accepted Mt. Savior Monastery as a member of the Subiaco Cassinese Congregation. Our best wishes and prayers are extended to our brothers in Elmira, NY!

Mutual Assistance: Members of the Congregation's mutual assistance committee met at Newark Abbey on September 24, 2018 to assess the results of the questionnaire distributed to the abbots at their annual workshop last February. The committee also reviewed the on-going work and status of various subcommittees on formation, liturgy, monastic life, safe environment, vocations and canonical affairs. A large part of this meeting was preparing a report, which will be given at the upcoming General Chapter at St. Anselm Abbey in June 2019. The committee members include Father Luke Edelen, O.S.B. (Newark), Father Boniface Hicks, O.S.B. (Latrobe), Father Bede Kotlinski, O.S.B. (Cleveland), Brother Paul Richards, O.S.B. (Collegetown), Brother Damian Whalen, O.S.B. (Shawnee) and Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B. Also present was Brother Patrick Winbush, O.S.B. (Newark).

Annual Synod at Montecassino: Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, O.S.B. convoked the annual Synod of Abbots President of the Benedictine Confederation at the Archabbey of Montecassino in Italy from September 10-14, 2018. Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B. was present to represent our own monastic

Congregation. On the agenda were reports from Rector Stefano Visintin, O.S.B. (Praglia), Prior Mauritius Wilde, O.S.B. (Münsterschwarzach) and Treasurer Geraldo Gonzalez y Lima, O.S.B. (São Paolo). There was a lively discussion on an increase to the solidarity and subsidium fees paid by the nineteen monastic Congregations annually to S. Anselmo, which will begin with the new Catalogus 2020. The synod fathers also elected three members to the Permanent Synod, which acts as the council of the Abbot Primate. Elected were Abbot General Giuseppe Casetta, O.S.B. of the Vallombrosian Congregation, Abbot President Guillermo Leon Arboleda Tamayo O.S.B. of the Subiaco Cassinese Congregation and Abbot President Jeremias Schröder, O.S.B. of the St. Ottilien Congregation, who was also elected as Vicar to the Abbot Primate.

CMSM Assembly: More than 100 major superiors of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life met in St. Louis, MO on August 1-3, 2018 for the annual assembly of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, entitled, *Youth & Religious Leaders Together: Discerning in Missionary Discipleship*. The keynote presenters were the Most Rev. David Kondera, Bishop of Tulsa who had worked for many years in university campus ministry and Curtis Martin, founder and CEO of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students. The assembly concluded with an open forum covering the newest data on vocations, social media, and evangelization was led by Bro. Sean Sammon, FMS together with Father Tom Gaunt, SJ, Brother Javier Hansen, FSC, Dr. Mary Hess, Brian Miller and Andrew Paulsen, all of whom have done ministry in and/or research about youth and young adult ministry in the USA. A separate and parallel track has held for vocation and youth ministry directors. Archbishop Robert Carlson concluded the assembly with a festive liturgy. Among those present at this year's assembly were Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B., Abbot John Klassen, O.S.B. (Collegeville), Abbot Lawrence Stasyszen, O.S.B. (Shawnee), Brother Paul-Vincent Niebauer, O.S.B. and Mr. Jason Ziegler (Collegeville).

Vocation Workshop: Abbot Richard Cronin, O.S.B. and the monastic community of St. Mary's Abbey in Morristown, N.J. welcomed the vocation directors of our monastic congregation to a special workshop on the ministry of vocation discernment on July 5-9, 2018. The workshop was led by Abbot Christopher Jamison, O.S.B., President of the English Benedictine Congregation and Ruth Holgate, director of the Loyola Hall Spirituality Center. Present from the monasteries of our monastic congregation were Abbot Philip Davey, O.S.B. (Peru), Prior Boniface Copelan, O.S.B. (Shawnee), Prior Michael Taffe, O.S.B. (Richardton), Father Canice McMullen, O.S.B. (Latrobe), Brother Paul-Vincent Niebauer, O.S.B. and Mr. Jason Ziegler (Collegeville), Brother Leven Harton, O.S.B. (Atchison), Father Joseph Voltaggio, O.S.B. (Morristown), Father Joel Matin, O.S.B. and Brother Marion Sanchez, O.S.B. (Cullman), Father James Flint, O.S.B. (Lisle), Brother Peter van Ginkel, O.S.B. (Muenster), Father Paul Weckert, O.S.B. (Lacey), Father Thomas Sanders, O.S.B. (Cleveland), Brother Patrick Winbush, O.S.B. (Newark). Also present were vocation directors from three English Benedictine houses in Portsmouth, R.I., St. Louis, MO, and Washington, D.C. At the conclusion of the workshop participants visited the MET's Cloisters in Fort Tyron Park, NY and then joined the monks of Newark Abbey for Mass and supper.

Benedictine Leadership: Thirty-four lay educators from Benedictine secondary schools throughout the USA met in Lisle, IL on June 25-29, 2018 for the inaugural *Br. Edward Englund, O.S.B. Benedictine Leadership Institute*. The institute was hosted collectively by the Benedictines at the "four corners" – Benedictine University, Benet Academy, Sacred Heart Monastery and St. Procopius Abbey. The participants were welcomed by Tim Molak, Head of School at Woodside Priory and regional delegate for North American with the International Commission on Benedictine Education, and by Dr. James Payne, Provost of Benedictine University. The opening keynote was given by Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B. on *The School of the Lord's Service: The Divine Presence is Everywhere*. Additional presentations were given by Sister Judith Ann Heble, O.S.B. on the *Benedictine Charism*, by Pamela McQueen on *Benedictine Leadership: Your Way of Acting Should be Different*, by Father Joel Rippinger, O.S.B. on *A Historical Window for Assessing the Educational Work of American Benedictines*, and by Dr. Alicia Cordoba Tait on *Looking to the Future*. The participants also gathered for small group discussions, *lectio divina*, morning prayer, Mass, and evening prayer (or compline) each day. This is the first of a three-year summer curriculum

for teachers and administrators in Benedictine secondary schools. The participants expressed interest in returning for the second-cycle curriculum in June 2019. A common sentiment among the participants is that we should be collaborating in this way more often! This inaugural leadership institute was in loving memory of Brother Edward Englund, O.S.B., founding member and first regional delegate for North American on the International Commission for Benedictine Education. The following schools sponsored by monasteries of our own monastic congregation were in attendance: Benet Academy, Lisle, IL; Benedictine College Prep, Richmond, VA; Benedictine High School, Cleveland, OH; Benedictine Military School, Savannah, GA; Delbarton School, Morristown, NJ; Maur-Hill Mount Academy, Atchison, KS; St. Bede Academy, Peru, IL; St. Benedict's Prep, Newark, NJ; St. John's Prep, Collegeville, MN; Woodside Priory School, Portola Valley, CA.

Juniorate Conference: Abbot Mark Cooper, O.S.B. and the monastic community at St. Anselm Abbey, Manchester, NH welcomed more than thirty monks in simple vows for the annual formation seminar from June 14-23, 2018. The program included a variety of conferences and cultural activities, including Abbot Matthew Leavy, O.S.B. on *lectio divina* and *conversatio*, Father Jerome Day, O.S.B. on good zeal, Father John Fortin, O.S.B. on obedience and stability. The program included a visit to the J.F.K. Presidential Library in Boston, MA. During the program, Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B. lead a discussion with the junior professed on the upcoming Synod on *Youth, Faith, and Vocational Discernment*. There was also some free-time during the seminar for optional basketball, volleyball, bowling and hiking. Many of the participants in this formation seminar were monks of our monastic congregation, including juniors from Latrobe, Collegeville, Atchison, Morristown, Belmont, Cullman, Shawnee, Richardton, Peru, Manchester, Newark and Richmond. Many thanks to the program coordinators, Brother Francis McCarty, O.S.B and Brother Ignatius Membrino, O.S.B.

Praesidium: Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B. and Father Roman Paur, O.S.B. (Collegeville) attended the biannual meeting of the Praesidium board on June 6-7, 2018 at their national offices in Arlington, TX. Praesidium works with various secular and religious organizations in the USA and abroad to develop best practices in organizational abuse prevention. Since 2004, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men has engaged religious institutes of men and societies of apostolic life to adopt these policies and to achieve third-party accreditation by Praesidium.

Canonical Visitations: Abbot Philip Davey, O.S.B. (Peru) and Father Augustine Kelly, O.S.B. (Manchester) conducted the quinquennial canonical visitation at Newark Abbey on October 14-18, 2018. Abbot Matthew Leavy, O.S.B. (Manchester, O.S.B. (Manchester) and Father Daniel Ward, O.S.B. (Collegeville) conducted the quinquennial canonical visitation at Mary Mother of the Church Abbey, Richmond, VA on October 4-6, 2018. The Abbot President was present for both visitations.

Pastoral Visits: The Abbot President made the following pastoral visits: Collegio Sant'Anselmo, Rome on November 24-26, 2018; St. Procopius Abbey, Lisle, IL on November 5-7, 2018; St. Andrew Abbey, Cleveland, OH on October 31-November 3, 2018; St. Anselm Abbey, Manchester, NH on October 23-26, 2018; St. Leo Abbey, St. Leo, FL on October 10-14, 2018.

Upcoming Events: Mark Your Calendars!

- ***Benedictine Abbots and Prioresses*** quadrennial joint meeting at St. Bernard Abbey, Cullman, AL from February 22-26, 2019.
- ***53rd General Chapter*** at St. Anselm Abbey, Manchester, NH from June 16-21, 2019.
- ***Benedictine Leadership Institute*** at St. John's Abbey and University from June 24-28, 2019.
- ***Benedictine Development Symposium*** at Christ the King Priory, Schuyler, NE from July 22-26, 2019. www.benedictinedevelopment.com
- ***BE Net 2019: Benedictine Wisdom under the Southern Cross***, at St. Scholastica's College, Sydney, Australia from September 30-October 4, 2019. www.benet2019.org