



Federation of Saint Scholastica

Gyrovagi

Gyrovagi: An occasional newsletter from the President of the Federation of St. Scholastica
April 2017

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Pre-Chapter to meet at Saint Leo University June 15—19, 2017



The prioresses and delegates of the Chapter of the Federation of Saint Scholastica will meet for the Pre-Chapter at Saint Leo University in St. Leo, Florida in June, with **Sister Roberta Bailey** and the Sisters of Holy Name Monastery in St. Leo hosting. I am especially appreciative of Sister Roberta's acting as the point person for the Federation with the Saint Leo University coordinator for the Pre-Chapter. She has been most generous.

Sister Edith Bogue, OSB of St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth, Minnesota will be the guest speaker. Her topic will be "Facing Forward with Hope." Here is a summary about what she will talk with us:

"Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:13b-14

All of our monastic communities are in the midst of a time of transition and uncertainty. Our gaze is drawn backward as we strive to maintain our way of life, our institutions, and our ministries. Like St. Paul, we are called to turn our faces forward that we may better hear and discern God's call for Benedictine women now, in this time. What signs, what guideposts, which companions, has God given us in this new stage of the journey? This Pre-Chapter gives us a chance to develop a spirituality and a methodology for exploring these questions.

Federation Chapter to meet at Benedictine Sisters Retreat Center at Sacred Heart June 13-18, 2018

Sister Tonette Sperando, prioress, and the Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman will welcome the prioresses and delegates of the Chapter of the Federation of St. Scholastica next year. They look forward to having us. **Sister Elisabeth Meadows**, the director of the Retreat Center (and also a Chapter delegate), who has been in charge of hosting other Benedictine groups such as the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses and the Benedictine Spirituality Workshop and Retreat for Sisters preparing for their perpetual monastic profession, says, "It will be an honor for us to host the quadrennial Chapter meeting of the Federation of St. Scholastica. We are happy we can share our new and renewed retreat center spaces and monastery with the prioresses and delegates."

Spring time in Cullman ~



President's Travels 2017

Jan 9-11—Baltimore
Resource Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI) conference planning

Jan 11-15—New Orleans
Gulf Coast Faith Formation Conference, speaker

Jan 18—20— Erie Diocesan Chancery Meeting regarding the St. Marys' property

Jan 29—February 5—Tucson
Conference of Benedictine Prioresses

Feb 20—22—Mexico City
Visit with community at Monasterio de San Benito

March 30—April 2—Ridgely
Visit with community at St. Gertrude Monastery

April 27—May 1—Colorado Springs
Election

May 1—5—Beech Grove
American Benedictine Formation Conference

May 6—9—Mexico City
Meetings with community at Monasterio de San Benito

May 9—11—RCRI Board

May 11—14—Ridgely
Election of prioress

May 15—18—St. Joseph, Minnesota
Men and Women OSB presidents meeting at St. Benedict Monastery

May 23—25—Darien, Illinois
RCRI Workshop "Fidelity to the Journey"

June 6—11— Atchison election

June 15—19—Saint Leo University, FL
PRE-CHAPTER

June 22—29—Yankton, South Dakota
Federation of St. Gertrude Chapter Meeting, Observer; facilitator of the election of new President

August 7—12—Orlando
LCWR

Sept 5—20—South Korea
Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum (CIB)

Sept 27—Oct 1—Erie
Federation Council meeting

Oct 24—27—Ridgely
TriCommunity workshop (Baltimore, Bristow and Ridgely)

Oct 30—Nov 3—St. Louis
RCRI Annual Conference

Nov 9—13—Boerne Visitation
St. Scholastica Monastery

Nov 16—19—Tulsa
Visitation at St. Benedict Monastery



Sister Lynn McKenzie, OSB
President
Federation of St. Scholastica

New Administrator Appointed at Monasterio de San Benito, Mexico City

Sister Anne Shepard of Mount Saint Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas has been appointed as the Administrator of Monasterio de San Benito, in Mexico City. Her experience as prioress at the Mount and as superintendent of education in the Kansas City diocese give her unique qualifications to serve in this position. The Sisters in Mexico City own two schools and there are many issues there which Anne will oversee. I thank Anne and her community for their generosity in her agreement to serve in this capacity. I also wish to thank **Sister Josephine Markiwicz** who Anne is succeeding as Administrator.



*For everything there
Is a season
And a time for
Every matter
Under heaven...*
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8



News from the CIB (Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum)



The CIB delegates from the 19 regions of the world met in Assisi and Rome in September 2017. **Mother Mariangela Yator, OSB**, Abbess of Monastero S. Giuseppe, Assisi, Italy, who is the CIB delegate for Italy, hosted our meetings at her monastery's guest center. After introductions, we heard about plans for the 2018 CIB Symposium to be held at Sant' Anselmo in Rome with the theme of Hospitality, had presentations by **Fr. William Skudlarek, OSB** regarding AIM International and **Fr. Cassian Folsom**, then prior of the men's monastery in Norcia, regarding the possible future renovation of the dilapidated chapel of Saint Scholastica, and heard the finance report of the CIB. In addition, **Sisters Scholastika Haring, OSB** (Dinklage, Germany) and Lynn McKenzie (Cullman), canonists, made a presentation on *Vultum Dei quaerere*, the Apostolic Constitution of the Holy Father issued in July 2016 which applies to enclosed women monastics. The outgoing CIB delegates were given a blessing, and the candle of the host country was passed from Italy to South Korea, which is where the September 2017 of the CIB Conference will be held.

The CIB delegates visited two other monasteries nearby and received outstanding Benedictine hospitality. After leaving Assisi, the CIB delegates travelled to Rome for the quadrennial meeting of the Congress of Abbots at Sant' Anselmo. For many years now, CIB delegates have been invited as observers at the abbots' meeting. We were able to be participants in all of the workshops offered during the course of the two week meeting of the abbots. The abbot primate has always graciously attended the meetings of the CIB conference. For the first time, the CIB delegates were able to formally meet with the abbot primate (newly elected **Gregory Polan** of Conception, Missouri) together with the Council of Abbot Presidents. This was an opportunity to begin discussions about possible collaboration between

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Men and women participants at Congress of Abbots, Sant'Anselmo, Rome, Sept. 2016

Following is the article submitted for the CIB newsletter which concerned the visit to the Vatican Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life.

Two Canonists go to Vatican Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life

After the July 2016 publication of the Apostolic Constitution, *Vultum Dei quaerere*, two women Benedictines who are canonists and who met each other through the CIB Symposium, **Sisters**

Scholastika Häring, OSB (Dinklage, Ger-

many) and **Lynn McKenzie, OSB** (Cullman USA), began studying the document and sharing insights about it via email. This culminated in a presentation at the meeting of the CIB Conference of Delegates in Assisi, Italy. Sister Scholastika, together with Sister Lynn, presented an overview of the document for the delegates and the conference then discussed it at some length. The meaning of this new legislation for women of cloistered monastic communities was received with appreciation, but also with many questions. Because the document said that a further Instruction would be forthcoming from the Vatican Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, before coming to Rome Lynn had already scheduled a meeting at the Congregation to pose questions and make suggestions for the expected Instruction and Scholastika had agreed to join her.

On September 8, 2016, after the private audience with the Holy Father and the Congress of Abbots and CIB Conference, Scholastika and Lynn met with **Father Hank Lemoncelli**, OMI of the Vatican Congregation. Father Lemoncelli, while not serving in the monastic section of the Congregation, received the canonists graciously and listened well to their concerns and gave his own insights about the document. At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that Father Lemoncelli would seek some responses to the questions of the canonists and respond to them. Thereafter, the two canonists will have an opportunity to submit in writing observations, questions and suggestions about the new Apostolic Constitution and the forthcoming Instruction from the Vatican Congregation. It is expected that the new Instruction will be published within the next year.

the men and women on the international level. We were grateful for this opportunity. During the course of our time in Rome, the abbots and the CIB delegates had the honor of having a private audience with Pope Francis at the Vatican. Also during the course of our time in Rome, the Americans among us were invited to an informal supper with the American deputy ambassador to the Vatican and his family.

Here is an excerpt from my email to all the prioresses which I sent from Rome at the end of the Congress of Abbots:

Serving as CIB delegate, which the prioresses gave me the privilege of doing, has been such an amazing experience for me. It is difficult to articulate the way this experience has changed me for the better and has enriched my life and my service among you. I am sure it is a lifetime of learnings that I will need to integrate over the next years. One thing I can say is that getting to know Benedictine women from all over the world, though we may look different by our style of dress, has been a tremendous experience of communion among all of us who share the Benedictine charism. I now know people from all over the world who share this way of life, and it gives me a much richer perspective and experience of my vocation as a Benedictine woman. I am most grateful. When I think of the wonderful experiences that this Alabama girl has been privileged to have, I am overwhelmed. I thank you for your trust in me and for helping me grow in my vocation. My heart is still so full of gratitude for the experience of being your CIB delegate!

The Good Zeal of Monastics



In December 2016 I was honored to be invited to give the annual day of reflection/recollection to the Sisters of St. Walburga Monastery in Elizabeth, New Jersey. The topic was Good Zeal. Having the motivation to read as much as I could on the topic of good zeal, the preparation, reading and writing on good zeal was a wonderfully enriching experience in which I felt I deepened in my appreciation of this wisdom of St. Benedict.

During my preparation for these talks, I asked some of our Sisters in my monastery in Cullman what came to mind for them when they thought of Benedict's teaching on good zeal. Two of our elder members gave me some wonderful bits on this important lesson: "endurance, joy, enthusiastic love."

I read many wonderful articles and texts of talks on this topic and there was no way I could use all the good things I read in my two short, simple talks. One of the most compelling quotations I found is from **Sister Cabrini Schmitz** of St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith, Arkansas, ("RB 72. The Good Zeal which Monastics Ought to Have," Tjurunga 73, 53-57 (November 2007) and I believe it is something we all need to remind ourselves of from time to time:

Good zeal is essentially *relational*. . . We all make choices about our relationships. We hold some individuals closely, cherish and honor them, while for others we establish walls, walls that separate us emotionally and relationally from them. In a monastic community we have been called to *zealous living* with and for others. Our communities will not thrive, much less survive, if inhabited by members who give mediocre, lukewarm, selective participation; our promise of stability forbids it. . . Living in loving relationships on a daily basis is difficult but essential if we are to grow in the image of God. . . Lived intentional monastic life is intense, but positioning ourselves in an unconditional stance of open hearted listening and responding, our relatedness will resemble the self-giving relatedness in the Trinity. We are called to empty ourselves of self will so that God can fill us with unselfish love and generous giving. . . Zealous love is demonstrated in all the little things of daily life. This love demands that each monastic make relationships, vertical and horizontal, a priority in her life. If we are to be good and faithful stewards of the legacy given us, is it not incumbent on each of us then to make a commitment of our presence, our time, our gifts and ideas with each other? Love demands that we who have the three-fold promise of profession build community in our time and in our particular location with the people whom we did not choose.

The Good Zeal of Monastics
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Elections and Visitations Scheduled for 2017	
Colorado Springs election of prioress	April 27-May 1
Ridgely election of prioress	May 11-14
Atchison election of prioress	June 6-11
Boerne visitation	November 9-13
Tulsa visitation	November 16-19

The Good Zeal of Monastics

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Being good stewards of a vibrant community life is costly. We have to empty ourselves of our self will and we must listen to the voices within the community and cultivate the attitude and practice of mutual obedience. We are called to grow in patience with our own foibles and those of others which can be so irritating. As conscientious stewards of this monastic way, we will be enabled to forgive frequently and easily. We will be eager to share our insights, our piece of the truth, even when our ideas are sometimes rejected.

I am now reading Terrence Kardong's recently published book on the Rule entitled, Benedict Backwards (Liturgical Press, 2017). I heartily commend it to you. It is classic Kardong-writing with his own translation of the parts of the Rule that he quotes as well as his characteristic good humor and his willingness to shock or surprise readers with his pronouncements. His premise is that if we want to get the real meat of St. Benedict's teaching, we should read the Rule from the end to the beginning, because it is only in the later chapters that we discover the real Benedict, without the undue influence of the Rule of the Master. I appreciate Fr. Terrence's insights and challenges. His sharing of episodes from his own monastic life at Assumption Abbey in Richardton, North Dakota is part of the appeal of reading him and his teaching on the Rule of Benedict. It makes it real! Of course, chapter 72 of the Rule on the good zeal of monastics is one of the chapters that Terrence writes about in this book though he speaks of the chapter in terms of mutual obedience. Here is a short quote from Terrence on RB 72 in Benedict Backwards: "Monastic community life is a life of mutuality. What really counts is how we treat one another . . ." (page 6).

Vocation Prayer of Clement XI

O God, I want to do what you wish
For as long as you wish
In the way you wish
Because you wish.



Auction

Sadly,
Heavy-hearted,
Teary-eyed,
We watch
Our lives
Go out the door
Piece by piece.



By Ursula Laurent, OSB

1988 before leaving Covington, Louisiana for Cullman, Alabama

Update on the work of the Interfederation Archives Digitization Committee

This committee was appointed by the federation presidents/prioress general in 2015. It is ably chaired by Diana Seago (Atchison), who serves along with Rebecca Abel (Ferdinand, Federation of St. Gertrude), Colleen Maura McGrane (Clyde MO, Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration), and Mariterese Woida (St. Joseph, Minnesota, Federation of St. Benedict). The following is the progress report of the committee's work sent to the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses in January 2017 by Diana Seago:

Our committee began meeting in April of 2016. During our first meeting, we decided that we needed to survey as many archivists as we could in order to determine what their level of need, time, and their hopes were for this committee. We discovered several things.

- 13% of our archivists are full time
- 65% of our archivists only work on archives as they have time
- 78% said their archives are not digitized
- 78% do not have a procedure for archiving important email
- 96% said they would be very grateful for some basic archival training

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Interfederation Archives Digitization Update

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We also surveyed the prioresses in order to find out what you might find helpful in your archival use.

- 63% of you said you did not have a records retention policy for your community
- 53% of sub prioresses and/or councils do not save email for the archives
- 69% of you do not save your email for the archives
- 67% of you see advantages to collaboration with other communities when it comes to methods of preservation of community archives.
- 95% are willing to have a speaker on the importance of archives digitization at an upcoming Prioress meeting

As a result of these surveys, we have been able to determine that there are many different needs among the archivists of our communities. We have been able to suggest several free online workshops. Some found them helpful. Some found they did not pertain to their particular situation.

Our discussions and survey results have led us to the conclusion that the best way to help the archivists at this point is to provide some kind of professional training in the form of a workshop. We have been in touch with **Malachy McCarthy**, who is the Claretian Missionaries Archivist, about the possibility of offering workshops; and he is very willing to help in any way he can. We would very much like to ask him to speak to you at one of your upcoming meetings.

We have created a listserv through Google Groups in order to make it easier for the archivists to share experiences and ask questions of one another. This is just beginning and we are

hoping that as time goes on more and more will take advantage of the educational possibilities this listserv can afford. We continue to meet and are happy for any suggestions or feedback you might give our committee.



Update on the Federation Website

Sister Therese Haydel (Cullman) is our webmaster and has been great about posting election results with pictures and doing anything else I ask her to do.

Having her services has been a Godsend for me and for the feder-



ation. Therese also serves as chair of the federation website committee. The committee members are: **Suzanne Fitzmaurice** (Atchison), **Virginia Jung** (Chicago), **Mariana Olivo** (Torreon), and **Charlotte Zalot** (Erie). Beginning in April 2017 the website will have a new post each month featuring one of our member monasteries. The federation prioresses have signed up for one month each through the time of the federation chapter which will be held in June 2018 in Cullman. So, please make it a habit to check out the federation website each and every month.

In addition to the monastery monthly posts, we will continue to post election results with photos and dates of visitations, as well as other federation news, including the dates and locations of the upcoming PreChapter and Chapter meetings. Don't forget that other helpful information is also housed on the federation website such as Call to Life (password protected), Federation directory (also password protected), visitation guidelines and the Gyrovagi. The members of the federation council (under the tab Federation) are also listed there.

It is now possible, on the Home page of the website, to sign-up to receive email notifications when new items are posted to the website. Please sign-up Today!

Please send Therese any information or suggestions for the website. Her email address is:

thereseosb@yahoo.com.