

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LAY CISTERCIAN COMMUNITIES

House Report

- 1) Name of lay community: **Associates of the Iowa Cistercians (AIC)**
- 2) Contact person: **Peggy Russell**
- 3) Date group was established: **1995**
- 4) Number of members: **47 active members**
- 5) Monastic liaison(s): **Sr Gail Fitzpatrick, Fr Neil Paquette**
- 6) Date of adoption of the Lay Cistercian identity document: **2009**
- 7) Charter and Statutes – **AIC Constitutions and Membership Guidelines are attached**
- 8) Leadership Council - how many, how selected: **The AIC Council is comprised of eight individuals: two monastic representatives and from on-going formation members, four elected positions and two appointed.**
- 9) Formation program - topics, activities, etc.: **All AIC members participate in a 3-year formation program and attend teachings on the following topics prior to making a commitment : asceticism, Cistercian history and documents, community, contemplation, conversion, discernment & commitment, divine office, enclosure, formation, humility, imitation of Christ, leccio/scripture, obedience, psalms/prayer, rule of St. Benedict, silence & solitude, simplicity & poverty, stability, work as prayer, and Cistercian charism.**

Please describe your community's situation considering the characteristics described in the document generated in Dubuque on "Characteristics of Lay Cistercian Communities." (no need to answer number 1):

1. *Lay Cistercian Communities receive written recognition from the Abbot/Abbess of the monastery with which the lay community is associated.*
2. *Lay Cistercians communities are assisted by a liaison from the monastic community appointed by the Abbot/Abbess. The monastic liaison, to the AIC, from New Melleray Abbey is Fr Neil Paquette and from Mississippi Abbey, Sr Gail Fitzpatrick.*
3. *Lay Cistercian Communities recognize and adopt the Lay Cistercian Identity document approved in Huerta in 2008. The Lay Cistercian identity document was approved in 2009.*
4. *Lay Cistercian Communities have a Charter and Statutes, approved by its members, which outline the spiritual goals of the group as well as its functioning and the link it has with the monastery. AIC Constitutions and Membership Guidelines are attached.*
5. *Lay Cistercian Communities have a leadership council, comprised of lay members, that is responsible for the administration of the group. The AIC Council is comprised of eight individuals: two monastic representatives and from on-going formation, four elected positions and two appointed positions.*
 - **Two Monastic representatives, one from each Monastery, appointed by the Abbot and Abbess.**
 - **Four elected positions: 4-year term**
 - **Formation Team Member: appointed, 4-year term, may be reappointed.**
 - **Secretary/Treasurer: appointed, 4-year term, may be reappointed.**

In reflecting upon the Council and its functions, we rely heavily upon the Rule, looking carefully at leadership responsibilities and processes as they occur within the monastery as a model for the AIC (see, for instance, Chapters 2, 3 and 64).

6. *Lay Cistercian Communities have developed a formation program comprised of a curriculum of topics and learning activities that address the values and practices of the Cistercian Charism.*

Initial Formation: All AIC members participate in a minimum 3-year formation process that includes programs, presentations and discussion offered monthly.

Ongoing Formation: Presentations enable committed AIC members to draw from the riches of scriptural, patristic, liturgical, theological and spiritual resources in order to deepen their understanding of what is involved in living a Cistercian contemplative lifestyle in the world. On-going formation also includes a stronger emphasis on sharing individual talents and abilities in order to be of service within the AIC community.

If your community has a Charter of Incorporation or Bylaws we ask that you send it to us. If your community has a Council, we ask that you describe its formation, membership and election system. Your answers will be posted on the website of the association and may also be consulted during the international meeting in Lourdes.

House Report Submission Deadline: 31 December 2013

Please send to: thmcmahon@q.com