

## **House Report**

### **Weggemeinschaft St. Benedikt – Zisterzienserklöster Langwaden / Pfarrei St. Franziskus Bochum-Süd, Germany**

---

**1) Name of lay community:** Weggemeinschaft St. Benedikt – Zisterzienserklöster Langwaden / Pfarrei St. Franziskus Bochum-Süd, Germany

**2) Contact Person:** Gabriele Franziska Heitfeld-Panther, Cistercian Secular Oblate (Langwaden)

**3) Established:** The first meeting took place on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2002.

**4) There are now 20 members** (February 2014)

**5) Monastic liaisons:** Prior Pater Bruno Robeck OCist and other monks

**6) Adoption of the Lay Cistercian Identity Document:** 4th November 2011, (signed by Pater Prior Bruno Robeck OCist)

### **7) Charter and Statutes**

#### **Charter**

The Weggemeinschaft St. Benedict is a Lay Cistercian Community (the first meeting took place November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2002). Here different people meet: on the one hand there are those who for their life have found their Benedictine-Cistercian vocation outside the monastery and who want to deepen this vocation and to share it with other people and, on the other hand there are also people who want to examine and clarify their Benedictine-Cistercian vocation. The Weggemeinschaft mainly attracts people from the Ruhr-Area, but also a few from other parts of the country, and the community also cultivates international contacts.

1. The Weggemeinschaft is open for people seeking God. The Monastery of Langwaden and many external priests support the community.
2. It is essential that the Weggemeinschaft is essentially based on the Rule of St. Benedict and the Benedictine-Cistercian Charism, in connection with the Monastery of Langwaden. Monthly meetings consist of shared times and praying the hours, lectures and talks. The Celebration of the Eucharist forms the centre and climax of each meeting. The meetings enable people to experience spiritual life and to let it grow; faith is deepened.
3. Christians of different denominations and members of other religions are always welcome as guests.

4. The members agree that the larger bond of the Weggemeinschaft consists in the union through the Holy Spirit, in our common goal to seek God: Seeking God in everyday life, living outside the monastery, in connection with the Monastery of Langwaden and other external priests.
5. The Cistercian values are the guideline for the Weggemeinschaft. Through the support of the monks we are able to get to know these values and to integrate them into the community of like-minded people seeking God, as a basis for Benedictine-Cistercian life in everyday life.
6. This is a spiritual path within the Church, part of a centuries old monastic tradition: love of praying the hours and of the Eucharist as the centre of our faith, the union with Christ, with the Church and with each other, devotion to the Virgin Mary, intercessions for one another and for other people characterize this way. We learn to love the other person in a new way, through the love of God.
7. This community experience can be described as the birth of a new family in the love of Christ, which helps and strengthens us in our attempt to lead a committed and responsible life, without fear and with hope.
8. Focused on the Eucharist and prayer, the meetings support people in experiencing the church as „communio“, union with Christ, which unites and strengthens us when we live in different places.
9. On this Christian, Benedictine-Cistercian path with the Church the following aspects are of vital importance: focusing on the Eucharist, the connection with the Monastery of Langwaden as well as the support of the monks. Here we experience exchange, hospitality, strength through spiritual inputs and the sacraments, with the Eucharist being the heart of our common path.
10. We strive to live a life in the footsteps of Saint Benedict and of the Cistercian Fathers and – Mothers and with today's living Cistercian tradition, in connection with our meetings, mainly in the Parish of St. Franziskus Bochum-Süd (this is where most members are at home) and in the Monastery of Langwaden,
11. We see our apostolate mainly in purposelessly praising God in prayer and work, in the interceding prayer for one another and others, and depending on our individual situations, in taking on tasks for the Church and for society. Our prayer is linked with that of the Monastery of Langwaden and the whole Church. Our apostolate also finds expressions in our personal prayer and the special prayer of the Weggemeinschaft.

***Prayer of the Lay Cistercian Community Weggemeinschaft St. Benedik:***

*Loving God, I pray to you on this day for the blessing of all people who gather in the Weggemeinschaft Saint Benedict and for all monks and priests who support us. Help us, o*

*God, to become people of peace. Although we live scattered and in different places, help us, o Lord, to be united in the spirit of your love. We ask you to give us hearts wide enough to embrace each other and those whose lives we touch. Enable us to listen to each other and to learn from one another and from those who surround us every day. Lord, grant us the grace to bring you to the people in our homes, in our neighborhood and in our parishes. Give us the courage to take a stand for humane working conditions, strengthening times of leisure and respect for all creation.*  
*Let us bear witness of Faith, of Hope and of Love. Amen.*

12. As part of the living local church the Weggemeinschaft is a member of the Community of Spiritual Movements and Communities of the Diocese of Essen.
13. As a sign of the worldwide bond among like-minded people within the Cistercian family the Weggemeinschaft St. Benedikt is a member of the International Association of Lay Cistercian Communities.

### **The Weggemeinschaft St. Benedikt - Statutes**

1. The Weggemeinschaft St. Benedict regards itself as a Lay Cistercian Community, with the aim of living the Cistercian charism outside the monastery in everyday life.  
In the community different people meet: on the one hand there are those who for their life have found their Benedictine-Cistercian vocation outside the monastery and who want to deepen this vocation and who want to share it with other people and, on the other hand, there are also people who want to examine and clarify their Benedictine-Cistercian vocation.
1. Any Catholic Christian can become a member. Members of other denominations and religions are always welcomed as guests.
2. We advise members to seek spiritual guidance and the sacrament of reconciliation.
3. Members should attend the meetings as often as possible; we advise to attend not less than three times a year. Anybody who is not able to attend a meeting should give notice. The superior of the Monastery of Langwaden is to be informed about any changes in membership. Before accepting any new members the advice of the superior of the monastery should be sought.
4. All members of the Weggemeinschaft regard the spiritual communion with the Monastery of Langwaden as important. Therefore we ask the monks to actively support our meetings, as far as their situation allows without disturbing the internal monastic life of the monastery.
5. We feel associated with the Monastery of Langwaden, especially in prayer and we support the aims of the monastery as far as our status and circumstances allow. We

support the local church where we live as far as our personal circumstances allow.

6. The Weggemeinschaft St. Bendikt is a Lay Cistercian Community without obligatory promise. Those members of the community who wish to seek a closer relationship with the monastery can examine whether they have a vocation as Secular Oblates or Lay Cistercians.
7. We recognize and adopt the Lay Cistercian Identity Document adopted in Huerta in 2008.
8. In regular terms (at least every five years) representatives (representative and deputy) are elected. It is their task to organize the meetings and to coordinate the annual schedule. It is their task to represent the Weggemeinschaft St. Benedikt in connection with the monastery and outside, especially in the diocese and in the International Association of Lay Cistercian Communities.
9. We thank Father Heribert Weinbrenner, Secular Oblate of Zisterzienserklosters Langwaden, for supporting the Weggemeinschaft as spiritual guide and are happy about his approval to take on this task also for the future, as far as his situation and duties permit.
10. Most important for us is the apostolate of prayer, for one another and for others, which each member should pursue according to his situation in life.
11. The Weggemeinschaft St. Benedikt will try and support a social project of Zisterzienserkloster Langwaden.
12. The meetings are held to strengthen us for our every day life, the tasks and duties in the family, in the Church and in society.
13. We meet once a month for a day (9:45 to 16:00 hours), always on a Saturday, usually in the Parish of St. Franziskus Bochum-Süd. The annual program, if possible, includes a pilgrimage (of at least one day). All meetings are open to anybody interested. The meetings are advertised in the internet and in various other media.
14. The annual programme for the following year is developed by all members in the last quarter of a year. Each annual program has a set annual topic which leads more deeply into Cistercian spirituality:  
2005 – Faith and everyday life, 2006 – Paths to God, 2007 - Lectio Divina,  
2008 – The Eucharist, 2009 - Prayer, 2010 Community, 2011 – Prayer,  
2012 - Lectio divina – on the path to faith with the Word of God,  
2013 – Faith and Life, 2014 - Searching for meaning – Searching for God.

The aim is to lead into and practice Benedictine-Cistercian spirituality. Being together on

pilgrimages deepens community life in a special way.

**8) Leadership Council:** Representative and Deputy Representative - currently Gabriele Heitfeld-Panther (Cistercian Secular Oblate) and Ulrich Furtwängler, selected by the community by vote.

### **9) Formation Programm**

#### ***1. Bond with the monastery, Zisterzienserklöster Langwaden***

The spiritual bond with Zisterzienserklöster Langwaden is important for all members. Therefore we thank the monks for their active support of our meetings, as far as it is possible for them without disturbing the internal monastic life in the monastery.

We feel a bond with the monastery, especially in prayer, we support and promote the interests of the monastery as far as our situation in life permits, and we point to the monastery and its concerns. We support the tasks in the local Church, as far as our situation in life permits.

The Weggemeinschaft St. Bendikt is a Lay Cistercian Community without obligatory promise. Those members of the community who wish to seek in a closer relationship with the monastery can examine whether they have a vocation as Secular Oblates or Lay Cistercians.

#### ***2. We recognize and adopt the Lay Cistercians Identity Documents adopted in Huerta in 2008.***

#### ***3. Regular meetings***

We meet once a month for a day (9:45 to 16:00 hours), always on a Saturday, usually in the Parish of St. Franziskus Bochum-Süd or in the monastery. The annual program, if possible, includes a pilgrimage (of at least one day). All meetings are open to anybody interested. The meetings are advertised on the internet and in various other media.

#### ***4. The annual program***

The annual program for the following year is developed by all members in the last quarter of a year. Each annual program has a set annual topic which leads more deeply into Cistercian spirituality:

2005 – Faith and everyday life, 2006 – Paths to God, 2007 - Lectio Divina,  
2008 – The Eucharist, 2009 - Prayer, 2010 Community, 2011 – Prayer,  
2012 - Lectio divina – on the path to faith with the Word of God,  
2013 – Faith and Life, 2014 - Searching for meaning – Searching for God.

The aim is to lead into and practice Benedictine-Cistercian spirituality.

#### ***5. The topics***

The topics comprise, in re-occurring terms, different areas of Cistercian spirituality, to lead into and practice Benedictine-Cistercian spirituality:

- Christian life according to the Rule of Saint Benedict outside the monastery
- History of the Cistercian order
- Cistercian texts

- Spiritual union
- Lectio Divina
- Prayer / praying the hours / Liturgy of the Hours / contemplative prayer
- The Eucharist

#### **6. The management of the days of meeting**

The meetings are presided over by the monks of Langwaden, external priests, the spiritual guide or the community representative of the Weggemeinschaft St. Benedict.

#### **7. Every Monday evening: Adoration and compline**

Every Monday evening since February 2010 the Weggemeinschaft St. Benedict has invited anybody interested into the parish church of St. Martin in Bochum for sharing a time of silence and meditating the Word of God and praying, with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and for singing compline afterwards.

#### **8. The function of the spiritual guide**

We thank Father Heribert Weinbrenner, Secular Oblate of Zisterzienserklosters Langwaden, for supporting the Weggemeinschaft as spiritual guide and are happy about his approval to take on this task also for the future, as far as his situation and duties permit.

#### **9. Regular pilgrimages of the community deepen community life.**