

## **The Bonds of Charity That Unite Us**

Lay people, desiring to embody in their lives the essential values of Cistercian spirituality, have gathered together in communities attached to monasteries of Cistercian monks or nuns. The spirituality that inspires these Lay Communities is formulated in the document "Lay Cistercian Identity."

In order to foster communion among themselves and with the Cistercian Family and, in the spirit of the Charter of Charity, these autonomous communities have united together in an *International Association of Lay Cistercian Communities*.

The present document describes the functioning of this Association.

The Association will hold a Meeting every three years.

At each International Meeting a Steering Committee composed of three members representing English, French and Spanish languages will be elected by the delegates. The main role of the Steering Committee will be to serve as an interface between the Lay Communities on the one hand and the Cistercian Orders and Congregations on the other. The Steering Committee will develop the necessary means required to maintain the Association. In addition, it will organize the International Meeting every three years.

Representatives of Lay Cistercian communities that are members of the International Association and who have been elected by their Lay Cistercian community will participate in this International Meeting. In addition, monastic representatives from the monasteries with which the communities are associated may participate.

In order to allow the proper functioning of the Association and its autonomy, each Lay Community that is a member of the Association will make a financial contribution. The Steering Committee will be responsible for managing the Association's accounts. A written financial report will be submitted to the membership at each international meeting.

Other expressions of the bonds of charity between the Lay Communities are, for example, regional meetings of the Lay Communities, sharing of resources, documents, reports, etc., and possibly joint meetings.

Approved unanimously at Dubuque, May 24, 2011