

July 15, 2010

To all Lay Cistercian Communities:

The Steering Committee of the International Association of Lay Cistercian Communities is pleased to invite you to your 5th International Meeting in Dubuque, Iowa, from May 21-28, 2011. This International Meeting finds its root in the work we completed at Huerta in 2008 and it is a natural outgrowth of the *Identity Document* that was approved there.

In 2008, the General Chapters (OCSO) overwhelmingly passed a resolution that recognized Lay Cistercians as an expression of the Cistercian Charism: "We recognize the existence of a lay expression of our Cistercian Charism in the lived experience of the groups of lay persons associated with a number of the monasteries of our Order." After our hard work in Huerta in 2008, it is hard to imagine a more positive outcome.

The Steering Committee has completed plans for the 2011 International Meeting, and we would like to tell you about it. First of all, note that the date of the Meeting has been changed: it is now May 21-28, 2011.

A second vote at the 2008 General Chapters asked each of the 13 Regions of the Order to discuss the *Identity Document* that we produced together in Huerta. These regional discussions have been completed and the Central Commission has prepared the agenda concerning the Lay Cistercians that will be discussed at the 2011 General Chapters. In addition, Dom Armand Veilleux has been asked to prepare a document on what was said by all the Regions on the subject of the Lay Cistercians. This presentation will take into account not only the votes of the Regions, but what was actually said during their discussions. At the 2011 General Chapters, the Lay Cistercian question will be discussed by what is called "Ordinary Procedure". That is, it will be discussed by four Mixed Commissions, and then votes will be prepared taking into account the recommendations of those Commissions. In addition, it was mentioned that for the last four General Chapters, the Chapters were asked to answer a message coming from the Lay Cistercians or to react to some move on the Lay Cistercian's part. It was felt that, this time the Order should take the initiative—that is, the Order should take the initiative of telling the Lay Cistercians its desires or expectations, and then ask for their reaction.

As is apparent, the up-coming General Chapters will be very important for the Lay Cistercians, and it is additionally important for us that we prepare carefully for them in Dubuque.

At our meeting in Dubuque next year, we have the following goals:

- 1) Reflect on and share the relationships that our Lay Communities have with the monastery with which they are associated.
- 2) As we decided in Huerta in 2008, establish a permanent Association of Lay Cistercian Communities.
- 3) Reflect on and share what formation means for Lay Cistercians.

In order to address the first goal of the meeting, we would like to ask each of your communities to respond to a few questions about its relationship with its monastery. At our meeting in Dubuque, we would like to develop a summary document that addresses the issue of the relationships between Lay Communities and their monasteries that we can share with the General Chapters in 2011. Please answer these questions before the end of the year and send your response to me.

- Please describe how the *Identity Document* developed at Huerta helps you, individually and as a community, embody your vocation as a Lay Cistercian.
- Please describe your relationship with your monastery including a reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of that relationship. (Focus on relationships only, please.)
- Has your relationship with your monastery changed since our meeting at Huerta? If so, please describe.

I will continue to send you additional information about the 2011 International Meeting over the next few months. If you have any questions, please send them to me, and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

As in the meeting at Huerta, a maximum of two lay Cistercian from each community accompanied by a monastic liaison may attend. It is very important to choose the delegates who will represent you at the meeting. We suggested that the delegates be senior members of your community and that they have the ability to work intensely and in groups to make important decisions. In the various votes at the meeting, each community will have a single vote.

We are very excited about the International Meeting in Dubuque. I look forward to hearing from you over the next few weeks and months. Please acknowledge the receipt of this e-mail so that I am assured that you received it.

Sincerely in Christ,
Dennis Day
dmday@dayxday.org

PS: See the attachment for more information about the 2011 meeting.