

International Association of Lay Cistercian Communities

1 October 2014

Dear Friends,

It is just three months since the VI International Encounter in Lourdes and we write to turn your thinking to the future. The International Coordinating Committee met in Assisi from 17 to 23 September to review our last meeting and prepare for the next one. A discussion of the evaluations from Lourdes helped us to identify what we could improve for future meetings. This includes simplifying the liturgy, clarifying that the encounter is a working meeting (not a retreat or tour stop), and more work in the language groups so that there is less need for discussions in the general assembly, especially the expression of individual opinions. The following items were also addressed:

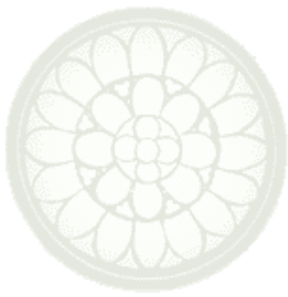
General Chapter Report: The committee presented a brief report (attached) on the activities since 2011 and the outcomes of the Lourdes meeting to the OCSO General Chapter on 22 September. We felt that the report was very well accepted and prompted some questions such as the average age of lay community members, how communities initiate new members, and whether most groups must limit the number of members. There was a comment about a lay community that is recognized by the monastery but has chosen not to join the IALCC with the feeling that they are not considered by other communities as Lay Cistercians. Dom Armand made a wise clarification that there is ambiguity with groups who do not join the association but then wish to attend the international meetings.

Community Recognition: Because recognition by the monastic community is vital to the long-term relationship between the IALCC and the Cistercian family, we believe it is necessary to confirm the level of recognition for those lay communities with provisional status or those who were recognized without a vote of the conventual chapter. For that reason, those lay communities with the above-mentioned status will receive a new recognition request for their abbot or abbess in October. In the future, we will request recognition every three years for those communities who continue to have provisional status.

Dues: It is time to send your annual community support for 2015. As written in the *Bonds of Charity*, "...each Lay Community that is a member of the Association will make a financial contribution." Please remember that as a minimum value, this contribution can be equal to the economic value received for one hour of work, or retirement income, in a year for each of its members.

Communities in the United States should send a check **made out to the IALCC** to me (Teresa McMahon, 4000 Oak Forest Drive, Des Moines, Iowa 50312). Please be sure to identify what community the contribution is from.

Coordinating Committee: Albertina Parayre † Pascal Sonzogni † Teresa McMahon



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In the near future we hope to have an international bank account that can be used for all community contributions regardless of location and by any member of the international committee.

Please send your dues no later than 30 March 2015.

Statutes: A first draft of statutes to govern the association and guide the work of the coordinating committee is written and will be distributed in November 2014. Communities will have until November 2015 to review the draft and provide comments.

Regional Meetings: We hope to have regional meetings in 2015 or 2016 in France, Spain, Latin America, the Netherlands and the United States if there is sufficient interest.

2017 Meeting: The VII International Encounter will be in Spain and will likely be hosted by all of the Spanish-language lay communities. The theme will be *The Lay Cistercian Community*. You will receive a letter of invitation with details about dates, location and how to prepare for the meeting in January 2015.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

In Cistercian love,

Teresa

Teresa McMahan
IALCC Coordinating Committee
English-language Representative