

30 April 2015

Dear friends,

Some time ago the Community of La Oliva shared a letter with all of us. In this letter the Community of La Oliva presents to us some thoughts that we all have to consider.

To help you in your reflection, the International Coordinating Committee thought it might be good to give a brief summary of the history of the Association since its beginning.

We also want to remind you that the Coordinating Committee is at your service. We are not a directive committee and therefore we do not make decisions that alter the agreements reached at the assemblies of the international meetings, and we don't have voting rights.

These are the meetings that have been leading our way in the short history of our Association:

Quilvo 2000 (Chile)

Three communities meet for the first time and find that something new is being born. A letter to Dom Bernardo Olivera is written to explain what they begin to describe as the new Cistercian charism.

The lay community of Conyers offers to organize another meeting after two years.

Conyers 2002 (USA)

A Steering Committee is chosen composed of three people with a single mandate: to organize an international meeting in France. A Communication Committee composed of two people is asked to "facilitate communication."

A letter to the General Chapter is written. Two members of the lay community of Conyers are invited to the General Chapter and read the letter.

Only one member of the Steering Committee perseveres and the international meeting is organized in France. The two members of the Communication Committee also persevere in their mission without knowing exactly what it is.

Clairvaux 2005 (France)

An International Committee composed of 5 people is chosen. Again they are given only one mandate: to organize another international meeting in a Spanish speaking

country. Shortly after being elected two of them resigned. The remaining three: Dennis Day, Christine M. Rossignol, and Tina Parayre, overcome the crisis and come together to meet and start thinking about what to do and how. There is nothing written, nothing suggested. . .

The International Committee is invited to the General Chapter. The General Chapter appoints Dom Armand Veilleux as liaison to the International Committee.

To organize the meeting, the committee proposes to develop a document about the Lay Cistercian Identity. With the texts received from communities around the world, a synthesis is developed as the martyr text to be worked during the International Meeting.

Santa María de Huerta 2008 (Spain)

Two documents were voted and unanimously approved:

- **The Lay Cistercian Identity**
- **The International Association of Lay Cistercian Communities is established
“Ad Experimentum”**

It was decided that three, one for each major language, is the right number of members for the committee. The three former members of the Committee are re-elected and three alternates are also elected.

The committee receives the mandate to organize an international meeting in an English-language country and, in addition, are commissioned to write a martyr text to establish the Association.

The International Committee is invited to the General Chapter and presents Lay Cistercian Identity Document.

Dubuque (USA) 2011

Three documents were voted and unanimously approved:

- **The Bonds of Charity that unite Us**
- **Statute of Membership in the International Association of Lay Cistercian Communities**
- **Characteristics of Lay Cistercian Communities**

The three former members of the committee are re-elected and three alternates are also elected.

Two mandates are given to the committee:

- 1) Organize a new International Meeting in a Francophone language country.

- 2) Write to the abbots and abbesses of monasteries with lay communities requesting that they give an official recognition of the lay Cistercian community and to state their desire for it to belong to the International Association of Lay Cistercian Communities.

The International Committee is invited to the General Chapter, presents the documents and exposes the need for lay communities to be recognized by their abbot / abbess and/or Conventual Chapter.

For personal reasons Dennis Day resigns and is replaced by his elected alternate Teresa McMahan.

The Committee proposes to the LCC members of the association to work together on two issues to develop the martyr texts to be discussed at the meeting: formation and the spiritual journey of Lay Cistercian communities.

Lourdes (France) 2014

Two documents were voted and unanimously approved:

- **The Lay Cistercian Spiritual Journey**
- **Statement on the Formation of Lay Cistercians**

The Coordinating Committee shared with the Assembly the great difficulty of coordinating the Association when there is nothing written on its functioning. The committee explained their discomfort and dissatisfaction when facing situations and problems that force them to take decisions without having a document that says what the will of the Assembly is.

The Assembly unanimously approves creation of Statutes as a guiding tool.

The Assembly re-elected Tina Parayre and Teresa McMahan, and elects Pascal Sonzogni

The Coordinating Committee receives two mandates:

- 1) Organize an International Meeting in a Spanish speaking country
- 2) Write a martyr text of the Statutes (Rules)

The International Committee is invited to the General Chapter and presents the two documents.

The Coordinating Committee drafts the martyr text of the Statutes and sends it to be worked by all communities. It also proposes the theme of next meeting: "See how they

love one another," and proposes to the communities to reflect on the topic: The Lay Cistercian Community.

Avila is chosen to host the International Encounter in 2017.

You can find this itinerary with all the documents on our website.

We would like you to consider that:

- The International Association is not meant to be a Lay Cistercian Community but a tool to serve the Lay Cistercian Communities.
- That the committee needs to have bylaws/ statutes to follow the will of the Assembly.
- The documents that have been approved unanimously are not for bureaucracy but the fruit of contemplation and the reflection of all LCC and certainly a grace of the Spirit.
- The great difficulty of people living around the world to meet once every three years.
- The great difficulty of three members of the committee living around the world to meet, and discuss in three different languages, to organize the Encounters and to respond to the mandates.