

BEAO MEETING

Theme: MONASTIC LIFE AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT REALITIES

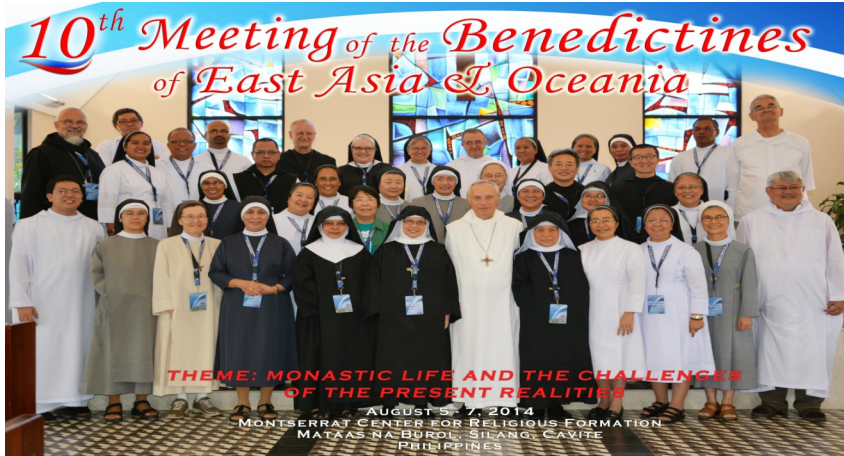
Thirty four Superiors and Formators from China, Japan, Korea and the Philippines (as host country) attended the 10th Benedictines of East Asia and Oceania (BEAO) Meeting held at Monserrat Center for Religious formation, Cavite, Philippines on Aug. 4-7, 2014

The participants arrived on August 4, 2014 in the venue. They prayed Vespers and proceeded with common meal at supper where they had time to know each other and welcomed by the host : Abbey of Our Lady of Monserrat headed by Fr. Rafaelito, OSB. A short orientation was given by the administrator : Mr. Kiko.

The following day, August 5, 2014, the Introduction of East- Asian Communities gave the participants an opportunity to learn about the different cultures of the countries where Benedictines are and how each community expresses its unique charism enriched with the Benedictine identity. "ORA et LABORA". A common situation that the communities are experiencing is the decrease in vocations.

In the afternoon, Fr. Percy Bacani, M.J. shared about the Challenges to the Philippine Church. As a context, he started his sharing by recalling the most significant renewal of the Catholic Church through the Vatican II. He said that the reason why Pope John XXIII (25th January 1959) called for the Vatican Council is not only for reform but a profound renewal affecting the Church in the context of the modern world and service to the unity of Christians and peoples of other faiths. An Inclusive Church (Lumen Gentium), return to Scriptures as center of reflection and theology (Dei Verbum), A Church actively involved (Gaudium Et Spes) are some of the challenges he talked about. The same challenges are posted on us today as we still face the realities of how we en flesh our being the Church of the poor since he says, " The Church has remained a Church for the elite and the middle class."

In the evening, Brother Nicholas Koss, OSB from China shared on the Benedictines in China. He showed how the Benedictines helped together in the Parish apostolate. He invited whoever is interested to spend time in the Benedictine communities there to help in whatever form such as lecturers or just enriching the Benedictine community by ones presence. He also mentioned the Benedictines in Taiwan who are in need of resource persons for their retreats.



The following day, August 6, Fr. Abbot Philip Lawrence, OSB Christ in the Desert Monastery, New Mexico, U.S.A. shared about " New Technology and Monastic Life". What is the Quality of Benedictine Life today?- this was the main concern of Fr. Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, OSB of San Anselmo. He talked

about the need to look into how we live our way of life.

Abbot Jean-Pierre Longeat, OSB, President of Alliance of International Monasteries (AIM) gave an update on: AIM and the Monastic World. He talked about the different activities of AIM supporting the different Benedictine communities in the different countries.

Fr. Mark Butlin, OSB is AIM's fieldworker for thirty (30) years now. He said that the problem we face today is that we tend to be concern with our own needs. The challenge we face is to be concerned also with the needs of others, build to a communion of life, be available with each other, and available with the resources we have and to share." He mentioned the "helping spirit" shown by KAMARU (Trappistines) who provided the "AWUESIAN" Community with an abbot .

Brother Nicholas Koss, OSB presided over the Business Meeting that had as its agenda the next BEAO Meeting in 2016. The group decided that Korea will host the said event. He thanked the Philippine team namely: Dom Clement Ma. Roque, OSB, Mo. Adelaida Ygrubay, OSB, Sr. Lydia Villegas, OSB and the Abbey of Our Lady of Monserrat headed by Fr. Prior Rafaelito Alaras, OSB who hosted the 10th BEAO Meeting for 2014.

The following day, the participants were given a "tour and visit" to the Abbey of Our Lady of Monserrat, Mendiola, after a "bus tour" to Luneta and Intramuros. There was an opportunity to celebrate Holy Mass at their prayer room and also have a festive lunch with the "San Beda, Mendiola Community. A visit to the Ayala Museum allowed the participants to learn more about the Philippines.

To culminate the Affair, the group was given a "fiesta atmosphere" as they entered the campus of San Beda College, Alabang, with Fr. Rector Anselm Manalastas, OSB leading the welcome. An evening of Philippine Dances and serenades with a festive dinner was a great delight and "happy ending note" for the 10th BEAO Meeting.

S. M. Evangeline A. Madayag, OSB