

it loses all juridical links with the founding house, whereas the latter has special obligations toward the foundation until it acquires the status of major priory or abbey. This problem led several Regions and the Central Commissions at Cardena (2007) to request a study of the possibility of maintaining a juridical relationship in these cases. It is difficult to conceive what this relationship might be, unless we opt to move toward a system of filiation in the feminine branch like that of the masculine branch.

At the same time, the requirements for approving a foundation are becoming less stringent, and are sometimes interpreted quite broadly, so that certain foundations remain in this status for many years. As a result, local vocations make their profession—including solemn profession—for the motherhouse, which might be a place they have never visited on another continent. At recent General Chapters solutions were sought, and sometimes the decisions of the two Chapters have converged regarding canonical votes for admission to profession. The suggestion has been made not to accept candidates for solemn profession as long as a community is not *sui juris*. Some answer that this measure would be unjust to candidates who sometimes have nine years of temporary vows and would like to make a life commitment. Others say that it is not just to allow them to commit themselves for life when the house where they live does not yet have a juridical existence or a certain future, and when they have no intention of going to live in the founding house with another language, another culture, and on another continent.

The evolution of the Statute on Foundations is an example of legislation that has constantly evolved in order to respond to the new demands of life. It also shows the danger of introducing new juridical categories that have not been well thought out, thus creating unsolvable juridical and human problems later on. The Order will doubtless need to rethink this whole question in the years to come, not only in light of the history of the past fifty years, but also in light of the entire tradition of the Order from the twelfth century until today.

### 10.6.2. The Order's Foundations Since the Time of the Second World War

#### OVERALL VIEW

A quick look at the list of monasteries of the Order, according to their foundation date, at the end of the *Elenchus Monasteriorum*, shows that the last sixty-five years of the Order have been very fertile as far as foundations go. Among the present monasteries of monks, 56 already existed before the Second World War, and 15 of those were founded after 1892. Of the 26 monasteries of nuns at the same time, 13

were founded after 1892 (see chapter 6, above in vol. 1). Since the war there have been 47 new communities of monks and 46 of nuns. Among these, 5 communities of monks and 8 of nuns are incorporations. All the others are foundations.

Before the war, only 12 monasteries of monks were situated outside of Europe (7 in America, 3 in Asia, 1 in the Middle East and 1 in Africa). In that same time period, only 4 monasteries of nuns were situated outside of Europe (2 in Japan and 2 in Canada).

Among the foundations of monks made since then, 8 were made in western Europe, 1 in eastern Europe, 10 in North America (9 in the USA and 1 in Canada, which was closed soon after); 7 in Latin America (5 in South America, 1 in Mexico, 1 in the Caribbean); 9 in Asia/Oceania; and 11 in Africa/Madagascar. Among the foundations or incorporations of monasteries of nuns in the same period, 17 (8 of which are incorporations) are in Western Europe, 1 in Eastern Europe, 5 in the USA, 6 in Latin America (4 in South America, 1 in Mexico, and 1 in Central America); 7 in Africa, and 5 in Asia/Oceania.

An interesting phenomenon is that, whereas the number of monasteries is continually on the rise, there is a continuous drop in the number of monks and nuns. Many foundations were made between 1944 and 1960, when vocations were numerous and the number of monks and nuns in the Order continued to grow. But, whereas there was a radical change in the number of vocations, beginning in 1960 for the monks and several years later for the nuns, the making of foundations has not stopped, even if it has certainly slowed somewhat. The average number of monks per monastery in 1960 was 55; now it is 23. For the nuns, these numbers are 46 and 25 respectively.

The main consequence of this phenomenon has been that a certain number of founding houses experienced a serious lack of vocations almost immediately after having made foundations, and for this reason were not able, in certain cases, to give these foundations all the help that they needed, especially in the area of formation.

#### ACCORDING TO GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS

##### *Europe*

Of the 8 foundations of monks made in Western Europe during this period, 2 were made in the 1940s, shortly after the Second World War: Nunraw by Roscrea in 1946 and Bethlehem by Mount Melleray in 1948. These two foundations were made in areas of the United Kingdom where Cistercian life was not yet present, namely, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This was not the case for Bolton, found-

ed in 1965 in the central part of Ireland, not very far from Mount Melleray and Roscrea, nor for Sobrado, founded in 1966 on the west coast of Spain, not very far from Oseira. Two others were made in Spain later on, both by La Oliva: Las Escalonias in 1994, and Zenarruza in 1996. We have to add the incorporation of Boschi in 1996 and that of Myrendal in 2002, as well as a recent foundation in Eastern Europe, i.e., Novy Dvur in 1999.

During the same period, several Spanish monasteries of nuns were incorporated into the Order: Vico and Arevalo in 1951, Avila and Benaguacil in 1954, Carrizo in 1955, and Tulebras in 1957. Brialmont, in Belgium, was incorporated in 1976, and Donnersberg, in Germany, in 2002.

Besides these incorporations, 9 foundations of nuns were made in Western Europe during this period: Nazareth by Soleilmont (1950), and Maria-Frieden by Berkel (1953). Valserena by Vitorchiano (1968), La Paix-Dieu by Gardes, Klaarland by Nazareth (1970), La Palma by Alloz (1976), and Armenteira, also by Alloz (1989), Tautra by Mississippi (1999), and Meymac by Laval (2007). We must add the foundation of Naši Paní in eastern Europe by Vitorchiano (2007).

Although one hesitates to separate these European Foundations into different categories, one can see evident differences between those made shortly after the Second World War, with the particular problems of that era, and those made in the 60s and 70s. Maria-Frieden, founded in Germany by Dutch nuns only eight years after the end of the war is a good example of the difficulties encountered by the first group. La Paix-Dieu and Klaarland, both founded in the same year (1970), can bear witness to attempts at a new, simplified expression of the Cistercian charism made in the 70s.

Concerning the *incorporations* of nuns' monasteries during this period, it might be useful to reflect on the way they were carried out and on the difficulties encountered, since we might have certain similar cases in the future. During the first centuries of the Order, when incorporations of monasteries were frequent, a significant group of monks or nuns were often sent to the monastery that was going to be incorporated, in order to help the community to grow in the Cistercian spirit and charism. The Order has not taken this kind of pastoral measure in recent cases: perhaps it was not seen to be necessary.

### *North America*

In the United States of America, three houses of monks were founded in the middle of the nineteenth century, and they developed slowly up until the Second World War. Before and after this war, there was in these houses, especially at Gethsemani and Spencer, a surprising growth in the number of vocations. Several founda-

tions were made in a few years, just to take care of the abundance of novices. Gethsemani made 5 foundations in the USA between 1941 and 1955, and Spencer 3 between 1948 and 1956. In Canada there were 4 houses. In 1977 a new foundation was made by Oka in Ontario to receive English-speaking vocations coming from the west and central parts of Canada; it was closed in 1998.

The first foundation of nuns in the USA was made at Wrentham in 1949 by Glencairn, and the second at Redwoods in 1962 by Nazareth. In the following 30 years, Wrentham made 3 foundations in the USA: Mississippi (1964), Santa Rita (1972), and Crozet (1987). The two monasteries of nuns in Canada have not made any foundations. Mississippi founded Tautra, in Norway (1999).

These North American foundations owe much of their vitality to the growth and the new role of the American Catholic Church in the decades following the war. Especially in the 70s, they were a creative force in the Order, which creativity has generally been welcome, even if it has sometimes been felt as threatening.

### *Africa*

Aiguebelle founded Atlas in Algeria in 1934. Next, in 1951, the foundation of Grandselve (now Koutaba), also by Aiguebelle, was the beginning of a long series of foundations made in Africa by several communities of the Order. The following monasteries of monks were founded: Mokoto, by Scourmont in 1954; Victoria, by Tilburg in 1956; Emmanuel, by Achel in 1958; Maromby, by Mont-des-Cats in 1958; Bela Vista, by San Isidro in 1958; Bamenda by Mt. Saint Bernard in 1963; Kokoubou by Bellefontaine in 1972; Awhum adopted by Genesee in 1978; Nsugbe in Nigeria by Bamenda in 2000 and Illah, also in Nigeria, incorporated in 2005 with Genesee as mother house.

The foundations of nuns in Africa/Madagascar during the same period were as follows: La Clarté-Dieu by Igny (1955); Étoile Notre-Dame by les Gardes (1960); Butende by Berkel (1964); Grandselve by Laval (1968); Abakaliki by Glencairn (1982); Huambo by Valserena (1982); Mvanda (Kikwit), an African foundation by another African Foundation, l'Étoile Notre-Dame (1991); and Ampibanjinana by Campénéac (1996). Kibungo, in Rwanda, was founded in 2002 by a group of sisters who had to flee Murhesa (La Clarté-Dieu) in the Congo because of the 1996 civil war.

One of the common characteristics of African foundations is the difficult economic situation they are facing at the present time. Almost all are reduced to subsistence living, scarcely producing enough to feed themselves, whereas several years ago some of them had a flourishing economy and were self-sufficient. This situation is due to the general state of affairs in Africa, which is determined by the

world economic system and local socio-political factors. Some have lived for years (as in Angola) or are still living (as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) in a war situation. The generosity with which they are faithful to their monastic life is admirable and, in some cases, truly heroic.

Another characteristic of many of these houses (not all, however) is that they have numerous vocations, even if discernment is much more difficult in a cultural context where there has not been a long monastic tradition, and especially when this discernment still needs to be made by the founders from another culture. Connected to this, for many of these foundations, there is a great need for assistance in this area of discernment and formation, but often no assistance is to be had, because the motherhouse is itself terribly short of personnel. Many monasteries need at least a few more persons to help with formation, or simply need a few solid and mature monks or nuns to model monastic values for the young people in formation.

Our African monks and nuns certainly have a special contribution to give to the local Church in the area of inculturation, as Pope John Paul II reminded them at Parakou fifteen years ago. Perhaps the quickest way for this inculturation to happen is to provide a solid basic monastic formation to all the young Africans who come to the monastery.

### *Latin America*

Almost immediately after having made three foundations in the USA, Spencer made two more in South America: Azul in 1958 and La Dehesa (later called Miraflores) in 1960 (Miraflores was passed on to Gethsemani later). Then, we had to wait 20 years before other foundations were made in Latin America: Novo Mundo by Genesee in 1980, and Jacona by San Isidro in 1981. Several years later, Los Andes was founded by Holy Spirit in 1987, and Evangelio (Jarabacoa) by Viaceli in 1989. Almost ten years later San Isidro founded Paraiso.

As for the nuns, Ubexy founded El Encuentro in Mexico in 1971. Then there were three foundations made by Vitorchiano in South America: Hinojo (1973), Quilvo (1981), and Humocaró (1985). Recently Tulebras founded Esmeraldas in Ecuador (1992). In 2001 Hinojo founded Juigalpa in Central America.

In South America there is now a solid and well-established monastic presence. The Cistercian Regional Conference (REMILA), as well as different monastic conferences of Benedictines and Cistercians of the Common Observance in Latin America, are active in providing formation for their members. Even though distances between houses are great, the means of transportation are certainly much better than in Africa. The number of vocations has diminished a bit in the past

ten years, but there is already a solid core of South American monks and nuns in each community.

Another reason that the foundations in South America met with many fewer difficulties than those of Africa is that this Church has roots going back more than 500 years, even though monastic life as such was not present during the period of colonization, except in Brazil. The small number of vocations coming from South American ethnic groups is a question that deserves reflection. Naturally it is linked with the history of colonization and evangelization of the continent.

### *Asia/South Pacific*

Consolation in China, Phare in Japan, and Latroun in Israel were founded in the nineteenth century. Consolation founded Lantao in 1928. In 1953, three years before founding Victoria in Africa, Tilburg founded Rawaseneng in Indonesia. Then, several years after founding Nunraw and Bethlehem, Mount Melleray founded Kopua in 1954 in New Zealand, and Roscrea founded Tarrawarra in Australia the same year. Several years later, in 1968, Sept-Fons founded Our Lady of the Isles, hoping to revive a foundation made in New Caledonia a century earlier, and in 1972, the American Region founded Our Lady of the Philippines. In 1980 Phare founded Oita in the central part of Japan, and in 1991 Vina founded Shuili in Taiwan. We could mention Saint-Sauveur here, founded in Lebanon in 1998 by Latroun and closed in 2006.

The series of foundations of nuns in this part of the world during this period began with three Japanese foundations made by other Japanese communities: Imari, by Tenshien (1953), Nasu, by Nishinomiya (1954), and Miyako (now Ajimu), also by Nishinomiya (1981). There was also a foundation in Korea, Sujong, by Tenshien (1987), and Gedono in Indonesia by Vitorchiano in 1987. Next came Rosary, a foundation made by Nishinomiya in 1993, and then adopted by Gedono; Matutum in the Philippines was founded by Vitorchiano (1993), and Makkiyad in India by Soleilmont (1995).

It is impossible to make any general remarks about this group of monasteries, for they represent a great variety of cultures and situations. Although faced with rather difficult situations, Lantao and Shuili courageously continue the Cistercian tradition established by Our Lady of Consolation, which was one of the largest monasteries of our Order shortly after its foundation. The Japanese monasteries of monks and nuns are witnesses to a solid implantation of the Cistercian charism in Japan for almost a century. Kopua is holding firm with courage, while Tarrawarra and Our Lady of the Philippines have been blessed with numerous vocations and other graces. Rawaseneng and Gedono also have a good proportion of their com-

munities in formation. Our Lady of the Isles in New Caladonia, founded in 1968, was closed in 2001.

A common trait in many of these monasteries is the great geographical distance that separates them from the motherhouse. Our Lady of the Philippines is an interesting case, since it is a foundation prepared and taken on by an entire region.

MONASTERIES HAVING MADE SEVERAL FOUNDATIONS

*Monasteries of monks*

- Roscrea, after having founded Nunraw in 1946, went to Australia eight years later, in 1954, and also was able to found Bolton in Ireland in 1965, but it was then that vocations began to diminish.
- Mount Melleray, after having founded Bethlehem in 1948, went to New Zealand in 1954.
- San Isidro, after having founded Bela Vista in 1958, went to Mexico in 1981, then to Ecuador in 1998.
- Tilburg, after having founded Rawaseneng in 1953, was still able to found Victoria in Kenya only three years later.
- Viaceli, after founding Sobrado in Spain in 1966, went to the Dominican Republic in 1989.

The most “fertile” houses are evidently Gethsemani and Spencer. Gethsemani made 5 foundations in the USA between 1944 and 1955; and later adopted Miraflores in Chili. Spencer made 3 foundations in the USA between 1948 and 1956, and then 2 in South America, in 1958 and 1960. The number of monks sent on these foundations is perhaps even more significant. For example Gethsemani sent 29 founders to Mepkin, 21 to Genesee, and 32 to New Clairvaux.

*Monasteries of Nuns*

The most evident example is Vitorchiano, which, after having founded Valserena in Italy in 1968, made 3 foundations in South America between 1973 and 1985, and one in Indonesia two years later. Later, Vitorchiano made one foundation in the Philippines and another in the Czech Republic. In these cases the number of persons sent is also impressive (22 to Valserena).

Next comes Wrentham, which, even though founded only in 1949, has already made three foundations, sending a good number of nuns. We could also mention other monasteries that have made foundations: Glencairn (Wrentham in

1949, and Abakaliki in 1982), Tenshien (Imari in 1953, and Sujong in 1987), Berkel (Maria-Frieden in 1953, and Butende in 1964), Nishinomiya (Nasu in 1954, and Miyako in 1981), les Gardes (Étoile in 1960, and La Paix-Dieu in 1970), Nazareth (Redwoods in 1962, and Klaarland in 1970), and finally Alloz (La Palma in 1976, and Armenteira in 1989). It is interesting to note that many of these founding houses were still relatively “young” when they made their first foundation.

#### SEVERAL COMPLEMENTARY REFLECTIONS

##### 1) *Relationship with the Founding House*

According to the Cistercian tradition, a community is founded by another community, which hands on to the foundation its particular expression of the Cistercian spirit. For a foundation to be successful and grow, it is usually necessary for it to have been wanted and warmly supported by the motherhouse. When a foundation is the personal project of an abbot or a small group of founders, without being accepted by the entire community (or at least a large part of it), it has little chance of growth. There are some cases of foundations that began as a personal adventure and have developed well, but only because they were accepted and adopted by the community of the founding house at some point.

The relationship between the motherhouse and the foundation during the first years of the foundation—that is, until the time of autonomy—is also essential for the healthy development of the new house. A community should not make a foundation if it cannot foresee the possibility of continuing to support the foundation for several years financially, or at least in personnel. Paternity must be responsible.

##### 2) *Collective Responsibility*

In spite of what has just been said, it happens that communities that seem to be quite capable of making a foundation, suddenly find themselves experiencing a lack of vocations or an economic crisis in their own community, and are no longer able to help their foundation adequately. According to our Constitutions, when the General Chapter approves a foundation, all the houses assume a collective responsibility in its regard. It must be said that there is great generosity in the Order, especially when a foundation needs material help. But at present there are quite a few foundations (and also older communities!) of the Order who are in extreme need of help in personnel, especially of persons capable of forming young monks or nuns, and this help is not available to them.

3) *Number of Founders*

In the Order the traditional number for a foundation is twelve monks or nuns. In former times, often a greater number was sent. In our recent Statute on Foundations, no more than six persons are required, and sometimes an exception is requested even on this point at the moment of approbation. Is there an ideal number? When a large group comes to a different culture, especially in the young Churches, there is a danger, from the beginning, of transposing large imported structures that will be difficult to adapt to later on. A smaller number of founders was adopted later on, not only because there was less personnel available in the founding houses, but also because it was felt that a smaller group could adapt more easily to a different culture. But experience has shown that if we want to establish our type of Cistercian common life somewhere, the group should not be too small. Not only do six seem to be a minimum, but also, besides the superior, these six should include a good administrator or cellarer, a novice master, and a person capable of being second superior. To create a situation where the superior of the foundation has to assume all these tasks alone does not seem fair to the superior or to the foundation.

4) *Adaptation and Inculturation*

Any reflection on foundations of the Order in the young Churches must involve the topic of inculturation. On February 9, 1992, during his trip in Africa, the Holy Father mentioned the importance of this topic to our monks and nuns of Parakou: "The monastic life is a great spiritual force for a particular Church.... I know the vitality of the communities of this diocese, one of which has already made a foundation outside of Benin. I invite monastic communities to offer their contribution, especially in the *area of inculturation*" (*Osservatore Romano*, weekly edition in French, February 9, 1993).

However, when speaking about *inculturation*, people often think only about *adaptation*. There is an important difference between the two terms. Adaptation is something necessary and important but it remains superficial. When one arrives as a stranger in another culture, it is normal to adapt to the customs of the local population. And we can say that, on the whole, the founders of our Cistercian houses mentioned above have been courageous and generous in adapting to local situations with regard to food, clothing, buildings, etc. The same applies to the use of local musical instruments in the liturgy, which has been done to a large extent. Inculturation is something much deeper. It is something that happens on its own

when the representatives of a culture have integrated the experience of faith and the monastic experience. The important point is that what is inculturated is not a series of external customs but an interior experience.

When one visits monasteries of the Order in the young Churches, it is a privilege to see a number of “authentic” monks and nuns among the local vocations, and this helps us affirm that an authentic process of inculturation is well under way.