

For the Consultation on the World Congress of Oblates 2013
Montserrat 22nd to 24th October 2010

Suggestions and proposals emerging from the World Congress of 2009

Most of the proposals made for themes at the Congress of 2013 were of a high level and, perhaps inevitably, there was a certain amount of duplication. Of the 59 proposals, the following underlying theme, or nexus of themes emerged: 'Identity-Rule-World'. It will be seen that this continues the thrust of the work accomplished in 2009.

The delegates in 2009 identified with a great spiritual sensitivity the centrality of the connection between a renewed spiritual life, growing in evangelical and mystical quality, and an historical memory of the Rule of Saint Benedict, the latter Rule being seen by many today as a foundation upon which a new contemplative project can be based. In other words, Benedictine oblates, as both Benedictines and laypeople, feel that a re-interpretation of the golden rule 'Ora et Labora' is not only necessary for a better understanding of one's own spiritual commitment, both spiritual and cultural, but can also be an important response to contemporary challenges in the context of the confused and tormented world in which we live and in which half of humanity is condemned to abandon the banquet of life. This context demands an ever closer dialogue between, on the one hand, religion and the world and, on the other, between religions themselves. This is a dialogue which is of crucial importance for the destinies of humanity itself and of the Earth on which we live.

A response to such wide-ranging challenges, however, cannot be attempted over a brief period but must have strong liturgical momentum as well as a solid foundation in a cultural consciousness animated by a spirituality capable of launching itself with ever-growing trust to the music and dance of this search. This will also provide a response to the radical crisis of prayer which stamps our times.

I think that a discussion of and articulation of these two points (i.e. liturgical momentum and cultural consciousness) would give the next Congress an interestingly 'formative' character which would be a qualitative leap for such international meetings of Benedictine oblates. In addition, it could offer impulses for a reflection (by an ad-hoc group?) on the theology of oblation.

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Sant'Anselmo, 22nd September 2010