

# THE BENEDICT TIMES

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TIBYC

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## FIBIYC, SIBYC, TIBYC - the development of an idea

By Nicolas Kunath

Due to the 1000 year jubilee of the Hungarian Pannonhalma Abbey and its School in **1996**, European headmasters of Benedictine schools come together in Győr, a town in the Northeast of Hungary. At that time, Father Michael from Meschede and Father Richard from Pannonhalma have the idea of organizing a worldwide meeting for headmasters of Benedictine schools. Abbot Christopher, at that time headmaster of Worth Abbey School, offers his school to be the host for this meeting.

In **1999**, Headmasters and teachers of Benedictine schools from all over the world come together at Worth. They decide to initiate an international Be-

nedictine youth meeting. Hubert Hering, teacher at Egbert-Gymnasium Münsterschwarzach, proposes to make an already planned meeting for German-speaking Benedictine students at his school become international.

The First International Benedictine Youth Congress "All together ONE" takes place in Münsterschwarzach in July **2001**. 300 students from four continents spend these days together in the small town of northern Bavaria near the river Main.

During an ICBE congress in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in **2002** the participants agree with the suggestion to launch more Youth Congresses and let it become a tradition. Abbot Christopher Jamison is appointed president of the ICBE by Abbot Primate Notger Wolf.

Due to political frictions and unsafe conditions, the SIBYC, planned to be held in Manila, Philippines, has to be cancelled. Woodside Priory California helps out

and provides the setting for the second youth congress in summer **2004**.

"**Conversations in California – breaking barriers, making waves**" is the motto for this event.

Due to the World Youth Day **2005** in Cologne, Germany is once more the ideal place for a Benedictine Youth Congress. The Abbey Königsmünster in Meschede takes care for the organization of the TIBYC.



**Allyce Smith of Australia** asked a few students: **Why these students feel attending a Benedictine school is better than attending other schools.**

**Eloise Connell (Australia):** At a Benedictine school you get to appreciate the values and traditions of the Saint Benedictine ways. My mother grew up with Benedictine aspects in her life and wanted the same for me.

**Jess Micallef (Australia):** Its an opportunity to learn more on how to balance your faith and everyday activities. It also strengthens your overall spiritually. Our school motto is PAX which means Peace. We learn how to bring peace into the world which is something that many other schools fail to do.



**Nico Kunath (Germany):** It is important that a school shouldn't only teach knowledge for your life. The Benedictine way of living can teach you a lot about how to make wise decisions in your life.

**Richard Molina (US):** Having a monastery on your school campus is an amazing part of attending a Benedictine school. It definitely sets it apart from other schools, you know that your school is special and does a lot more for you.

**Shannon McDonald (Australia):** The Benedictine school has everything a student needs. It fills my life with an opportunity to become involved in world and local issues therefore experiencing helping others.



**Mike Raysor (US):** At a Benedictine school you meet a lot of nice people as well as a variety. It also is good to share your faith with others that feel the same way. You also get the opportunity to learn and strengthen the morals of the Benedictine ways.

**Trini Rodriguez (Chile):** Going to a Benedictine school helps you to learn how to live in a community and how to share with others. I also get to learn Lectio which is an important part of our faith and traditions.

**Laura Moore (Australia):** Its an interesting way to live your life. I'm quite religious so it gives a chance to strengthen my faith and I get to learn more. I feel it will help me in making future decisions and living my life.

# Profile of Father Michael

**Richard Molina Jr., St. Benedict's  
Prep, Newark, New Jersey, USA**

"Love your neighbour" Fr. Michael Hermes, OSB, quotes. "You cannot have every man as your neighbour, but to love him, you need to make him your friend."

Fr. Michael was born before WW II, 1938, and grew up in Iserlohn, Germany. He knows four languages: German, Latin, Greek, and English, teaches Biology and Theology at Meschede High School, and was the headmaster of the High school from 1988-2003. He assisted in the planning of the Oasis, a building for the youth to use, i.e. youth groups who want to go on a retreat, with Fr. Steven and other monks.

Fr. Michael joined the monastery in 1960 and was ordained a priest in 1966. "When I was in my last year of study, I knew this Abbey.

I saw that this monastery was very young, and had only one building. My feeling was that here is a place you can do anything," Fr. Michael said. Fr. Michael did not just do anything. He took part in the brainstorming and



Father Michael - singing  
in the church of Hoexter

creation of the International Benedictine Youth Congress.

Fr. Michael's drive to get the IBYC started came from his childhood. "I [was] born before the war started. It was, for me, a tough childhood. After the war, I felt that I wanted [and needed] to have friends in other countries."

In his opinion, creating friendships with people from other nations would help create peace.

"The enemy is the man who is far away from you," Fr. Michael said. He explained that one major reason for all the violence and war in this world is because of the lack of international friendships. "The man who you don't know is a monster, and that's why it is easy to have a war."

Fr. Michael also pointed out that in order to promote this peace and friendship you have to shed all of your shields and armour. You have to make yourself vulnerable. "That is the true Christian way." That is why the experience of community is essential.

Fr. Michael said, "Maybe the students came here [just] for an event, but they [end up] learning a lot from the other students. They can realize the richness of many different cultures."

## Day to Day activities

**– Jessica Micallef – Australia**

The Third International Benedictine Youth Congress has had a very busy schedule. Benedictine Youth from all over the world have gathered at Meschede to take part in this fast-paced and enriching experience.

The Congress has involved many exciting activities. The very first night the youth presented their schools to fellow Benedictines. This ice breaker provided the foundation for a night filled with Filipino Compline, music, dancing and the forming of international friendships.

The following morning a wake up call of very loud Frank Sinatra music raised everyone at 6.30am. Morning prayer was prepared by the Koreans and they provided a very spiritual service. Friday was a very busy and exciting day. Many friendships were formed on the bus ride to Detmold where the Westphalian Open-Air Museum was visited. The Museum displayed German farm buildings from the 1800s – 1930s, it was an informative adventure. Another bus ride brought the youth to Höxter where midday prayer was held at St Nicolai's. The old and very ornate Benedictine Abbey of Corvey was also

visited and an organ concert was attended. Meschede was finally reached at 8pm. Upon return dinner was held, followed by Compline and the opportunity to attend a dance in the small gym.

Saturday was another busy day for the participants. It was an early start and many attended the moving Laudes held at 7.30am. The youth were given a choice of workshops for two sessions. These ranged from yoga to African drums, action painting to beading. The workshops were thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. Midday prayer was held in the church and it involved reciting psalms, singing in Latin and reading prayers. A soccer competition was held in the afternoon and many people got involved either by playing soccer or cheering their team along.

The night offered an International Drama held in the dining room. A group of Filipinos performed two dances wearing very beautiful traditional dresses. After this, representatives of most countries participated in a drama performance that involved many months of planning. This was a very funny performance depicting the story of Adam and Eve and Eve, tempted by a male pretending to be a snake, picked the sole apple off of the human apple tree. The drama conti-



International Drama  
in the dining room

nued into Cain and Abel, Noah's Ark and into a very entertaining performance of a man tempted by the devil. At 10.30pm the Hungarian Band began performing in the hall for people to dance and listen to.

The Third International Benedictine Youth Congress has proved to be an amazing experience due to the friendships formed, the pilgrimage involved in getting to Meschede and the activities held for the benefit of the Benedictine Youth. We will all leave as changed people; we have all grown both spiritually and culturally due to the nature of TIBYC.



## Changed Perspective

### Hungarians Experience the United States

We interviewed a Hungarian student who spent a school year at Woodside Priory Californian High School. We asked her about the differences between the American and Hungarian school system and education. The Woodside Priory School was established in 1957 by Hungarian monks. According to her opinion one of the main differences was the atmosphere of the

classes. While the American students' life is not so stressful, the Hungarians have to face with the difficulties of the everyday's oral exams and tests. In America you can choose your subjects and make your own schedule. However, in Hungary the students in the same grade have to take the same subjects. Therefore stronger community can be formed. Usually each grade contains 2 or 3 classes. In conclusion both systems are good but in different ways.

### The Hungarians from Pecs

## Workshops

### Doorways to Understanding different Cultures

#### Caris Bizzaca from Stella Maris College, Sydney, Australia

Piles of paper littered the long, low table in the Registration Lobby as groups of people milled about looking at the various choices for workshops which ranged from Computer Experiments to Bead Workshops, Bible Studies and Drama. Those involved in the Benedictine Youth Congress would sign up to a maximum of three workshops for the Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning.

Maria Jesus from Chile (16) spoke about why these workshops are such fantastic ideas when she stated, "Workshops are excellent as we can choose which ones we prefer and express our feelings through different workshops such as 'Action Painting'.

You meet new people and make new friendships with those from other cultures as many involve teamwork or working as a group and allow you to express your feelings and talents. Besides being able to try something new and different in workshops you are able to learn about different cultures and customs through such ones as 'African Drumming' or learning and applying 'Lexio' to your life situations".

These points can be seen clearly when attending just one of these workshops. 'Various Sports' had the blue team and yellow teams playing sports such as Frisbee, Rugby and Soccer in a non-competitive and relaxed environment. In Beadwork, as well as the workshop being fun, it was also challenging and interesting to do as you re-created your own tiny version of the South African flag. In 'Action Painting' where one could express themselves creatively by making their own abstract artwork. Eloise Connell of Sydney, Australia (17)

said of the Action Painting workshop "you let out a lot of energy and emotion ... you are free to do what you want and it is quite spiritual as you reflect upon the colours used in your own artwork and the meanings associated with them. It was heaps of fun." To see just how much fun it is, one must only look at the room in which it took place which is now covered in a myriad of colours from vivid greens to bright oranges and deep blues which form each individual painting as a splatter of different colours. What's interesting is also the fact that each painting is a portrayal of the emotions of the person who painted it and each vibrant colour represents a different emotion.

twenty people each pounding on an instrument. "It's really cool," states Rachel Vojelleiw from Germany (17), "because I like music, the drums sound great and I am able to see, hear and play music from another culture".

Not only are the workshops a challenging, new and exciting way of learning about different cultures and customs of youth from Benedictine colleges around the world but they also enable several of the students to become involved in hosting the workshops, thus allowing them to teach other students about their own unique culture.

Stephanie Garcia from the Philippines (16), hosted 'Kampampagan Culture' on Sunday morning which involved singing, dancing and sharing.



Meanwhile a cascade of noise tumbles through the upstairs window of the school and after following it, you can find yourself in another creative workshop – this one being African Drumming. The group sits in a circle each person holding a wooden drum from Africa. Together as a group they learn how to play the instrument and how the noise varies where the person hits the tightly stretched 'skin' of the drum. As the noise builds in the space, so too does the speed and energy of the group as they pour forth overlapping rhythms and sounds creating an awing sound that can only be heard when listening to over

It gave young people from around the world the opportunity to see her culture, and from this they can find similarities and differences when linking it to their own culture.

Overall, the 23 workshops were extremely successful as they not only enabled people to make friendships and find new ways of expressing themselves but did so in a way that was entertaining and fun with a positive atmosphere which enlightened the individual on the cultures and customs that are different from their own.

# Profile of Abbot Christopher

- president of the ICBE

By Nicolas Kunath,  
Muensterschwarzach, Germany

Although Abbot Christopher Jamison seems to be the most British person attending TIBYC, his roots are not to be found in Britain but in a former colony of the same. "I am born in Australia as one of four siblings," he explains. Still a baby, he came to England when his family emigrated. Far away from "Down Under", he grew up in the very heart of British lifestyle: Buckinghamshire, a western district of London, became his new home. "Living in a place with the name 'Buckingham'," he says with a smile, "can make you feel very British!" Not far from there, at Downside Abbey, he went to school and received the Catholic education he needed

to become a monk. But before he entered the community of Worth Abbey, he broadened his horizon by learning two more languages: He achieved the bachelor's degree for French and Spanish at Oxford University. He had even set higher goals: "Actually, I wanted to learn German too, but I decided to choose Spanish." His career as a monk of Worth Abbey reached its first climax when he became the headmaster of Worth Abbey School. Today, he is a leader in two respects: As the Abbot of Worth Abbey and as the president of the ICBE, he guides the fates of many people. His involvement in international projects like the Benedictine Youth Congresses is a passion which stems from his childhood: "Due to the many travels we made, I know what it means to live internationally. In addition, my family always kept an international outlook."

