

Community life

The icons of Bose - Saint Benedict

Bose, 8 June 2009

In January, which as always for us is a period of retreat and of silence, when we are normally closed to guests, the community lived intense days of the chapter. This year we have interrogated ourselves on chapter 72 of St Benedict's Rule so as to return once again to the heart of our monastic vocation, as individuals and as community: "not to put anything at all before Christ"

In January, which as always for us is a period of retreat and of silence, when we are normally closed to guests, the community lived intense days of the chapter. This year we have interrogated ourselves on chapter 72 of St Benedict's Rule so as to return once again to the heart of our monastic vocation, as individuals and as community: "not to put anything at all before Christ" (*Christo omnino nihil praeponere*) and "to practice fraternal charity chastely" (*caritatem fraternitatis caste impendere*), on which themes br. Enzo repeatedly asked us to mediate, also in his admonitions at Sunday evening compline, which likewise in this period were inspired by the monastic wisdom of the Benedictine rule.

After the chapter at the start of the new year, other chapters were held in January and February in view of the renewal of community offices. The prior, br. Enzo, accepted the resignation of br. Guido, who was vice-prior since 1984, and of sr. Maria, who was responsible for the sisters since 1985; to both of them the prior and the entire community owe thanks for service carried out with love. The prior has named br. Luciano as vice-prior and br. Vincenzo as assistant to the vice-prior. As regards the nomination of the responsible sister, the prior preferred that the professed sisters should indicate her: thus sr. Antonella was elected. We are very grateful to the Lord for this moment lived in peace, in great fraternal charity and in profound communion: rare gifts, which only the Lord can give, so it is to Him that we raise our thanks.

The consciousness of the centrality of liturgical prayer in our community life and of the need to do everything that is in our power so that it be truly *opus Dei*, "the work of God", has inspired during the month of January a profound revision of the way we sing the psalms, something that we have felt the need of for a long time. Our goal is to seek a style of psalmody that is more "meditative" and "prayerful", leaving aside tones that are too "lyrical" or "militant", which, as we realized, risked being too difficult to sustain from the musical side and did not favor adequately a climate of prayer and recollection. The new tones that we have adopted all have a pause in the middle of the psalm verse (between the parallel hemistichs of which it is usually composed) and seem to us to be more in line with a monastic style of psalmody, according to which, as St Benedict reminds us, the mind should always accord with the voice (*mens concordet voci*) and vice versa. In seeking this, we realize that we are only at the beginning and that we need help and support from those who have more experience in this field. We have been not a little reassured by observing that other monastic communities too have recently sensed the same difficulties in this area and are on the way to resolving them similarly to us.

Two sisters have finished the phase of their novitiate and have been received liturgically into the community: sr. Chiara on the eve of the Sunday in Albis and sr. Sara during the vigil of Pentecost have pronounced their promises of celibacy and of common life.