

Fraternal Visits

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ps Felice Di Molfetta, Sebastiano Dho, and Gabriele Mana

In the first half of this year again many bishops have visited us in sign of their communion and friendship and to share with us the anxieties and hopes of their pastoral ministry in their local Churches. Gabriele Mana, bishop of Biella, has honored us with his presence several times in this period.

In particular, he chose to celebrate together with us the conclusion of the week of prayer for Christian unity. He also requested that a member of our community participate in the diocesan pastoral council; brother Lino has been assigned to this service, as a spokesman for all of us in the local Church. Arrigo Miglio, bishop of the neighboring diocese of Ivrea, has likewise been a frequent guest of ours during brief stays of retreat, sharing with us our community prayers. Among the other bishops who have visited us we can mention: Roger Etchegaray, who chose to spend the last days of the year with us; Agostino Gardin, secretary of the Congregation for Religious; Piero Marini, master of papal ceremonies; Felice Di Molfetta, bishop of Cerignola – Ascoli Satriano and president of the liturgical commission of the Italian Bishops' Conference; Sebastiano Dho, bishop of Alba; Luciano Manari, bishop of Piacenza; Adrian Van Luyn, bishop of Rotterdam, who, as every year, spent a period of retreat in Bose in January; Marc Stenger, bishop of Troyes; François Loizeau, bishop of Digne; Rabban Al Qas, Chaldean bishop of Erbil and Amadieh (Iraq – Kurdistan); and Filoxenos Saliba Özmen, Syro-Orthodox archbishop of Diyarbekir and Mardin (Turkey).

As always, our dear metropolitan Emilianos Timiadis, whom we consider a brother of our community, spent some time in Bose (February and April-May), thus allowing us to enjoy frequently his lucid wisdom as a man of the Church and as "elder".

Several times during these months the following have visited us: priests of the Fraternity of Saints Basil and Gregory of Modena (their small book, *Una vita commune di presbiteri*, relating their experience in living a common life we have published recently); our dear friend don Cesare Massa, who also gave us the gift of his word in the Christmas retreat that he preached to the community and guests; father Mykola Makar, ex-prorector of the Kiev Theological Academy, who is now in charge of a parish in Milan of the Moscow Patriarchate.

In mid-May we have had the joy of having with us for a week father Georgij Ko?etkov of Moscow with about twenty members of his fraternity, who shared our prayer and work.

The visit of don Mario Polastro of the community of San Lazzaro of Pinerolo, an old friend of the community, was an occasion to recall the road we have traveled together through all these years and to hear about his experiences of life and faith, especially in the sphere of ecumenical relations that he has forged in his diocese.

Father Dominique Cerbelaud, Dominican, concluded in February his long sabbatical stay with us. Before leaving he offered us his reflections on community life in a commentary on Psalm 133.

Finally, we wish to mention the visits of members of Churches of the Reform: the Baptist pastor Peter Haldorff, who is in charge of the community of Biarka-Säby in Sweden, several of whose members have been our guests in this period, including Richard, who spent several months with us; the Compagnie des pasteurs et diacones of Geneva, who again this year came for a brief retreat; and the formation sessions for pastors and deacons of Switzerland, under the guidance of Solveig Perret and brother Luciano. In addition, an ecumenical group from Finland during its visit to the diocese of Ivrea came also Bose for a fraternal encounter.

The seminarians of the Romanian College in Rome, together with their rector, father Mihai Fratila, spent a week of formation in Bose.

At the end of May about twenty diplomats from Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries (Albania, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates), who participated in a two-week course on "The Catholic Church and the Holy See's International Politics" in Rome and Turin, intended to improve relations between the Catholic Church and countries with a Muslim majority, made a brief visit to Bose. They were accompanied by father Franco Imoda of the Gregorian University, which organized the course. The group met with our prior Enzo to share thoughts about inter-religious dialogue and peace.