



SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKING GROUPS

20th September 2005

The first question put to the working groups dealt with the role of the monastery as a school of prayer through which the Oblate was introduced to contemplation.

The role of the monastery as a spiritual school was acknowledged by the great majority of participants in the groups. It has been described as a privileged meeting place with Christ. The monastery is a place of nurturing, a sacred place which helps us to be more aware of the presence of God in all aspects of our lives. It also teaches us to find a balance in work, prayer, study and family life. Many have emphasised the role of the monastery as a school of silence which prepares us for contemplation and for listening, as well as a school of liturgy. The monastery is also seen as a centre for spiritual guidance. For some oblates, the monastery constituted a turning point in their discovery of prayer, a quest which they had begun even before approaching their monastery.

The second topic of the day concerned the importance of contemplation and personal, community and liturgical prayer in the decisions we take in our life. Contemplation is seen as a source of evangelical life which has to be reflected in everyday life, as well as a social and political commitment which must put the Rule into practice. Contemplation is the constant remembrance of God as our Father and of His mercy. Contemplation and prayer help us to slow down and to listen. Better decisions come from this patience, and this in turn leads to a more balanced life. It also fortifies us during trials.

Prayer is seen as a crucial aspect in the oblate's life. It is an openness to freedom, and it makes us artisans of peace. The daily Eucharist and silence lead us to an internal conversion (*conversio morum*), which itself renders us a light for others through our example. Through prayer we become more aware of our brothers and sisters, and of the difficulties experienced by those around us.