

Excerpt from the common letter of our Prioress General M. Angela Strobel, October 23, 2011
about the meeting of the CIB in West Africa:

On the first two weeks of September, three of us Missionary Benedictines, Sr. Mary John Mananzan, Prioress of Manila, Sr. Vania Maria Toscano, Prioress of Olinda and myself, had a unique experience in West Africa, Togo, Ghana and Benin. Unfortunately, Sr. Lumen Choi, Prioress of Daegu and delegate for East Asian Region, could not come.

It was the yearly meeting of the CIB (*Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum*) and at the same time the celebration of its 10th Anniversary. The CIB was born in 2001 in Nairobi, but before its beginnings in Nairobi, there was already a long process of preparation. Mother Edeltrud Weist and Mother Irene Dabalus were involved in this process. Really, 20 years ago, who could imagine Benedictine nuns and Sisters united, and who could imagine cloistered nuns – abbesses travelling hours and hours through the African bush to visit and meet daughters of St. Benedict in other far away places and cultures? This happened in the CIB Meeting.

It is a little miracle that nothing of that historical and canonical distinction between nuns and Sisters can be felt. The difficulties and surprises and some anxieties of the journey created an intense solidarity among the CIB members present, which by the way, is the first of the 2010-2014 CIB Goals. We visited three women's monasteries in a great distance, the Assumption Monastery in Dzogbegan and the Monastery of the Emmanuel in Sadori, Togo. The latter is a foundation of Dzogbegan and is an interesting one, being a foundation in the bush and in a Moslem area.

In the country of Benin we were guests in the Monastery of St. Joseph in Toffo. Then, on the long way back to Lome, the Capital of Togo, we reached the city of Ouidah, which is still in Benin. In this city was erected, with the help of UNESCO, a pilgrims' way: "The way of the Slaves", showing in a number of stations the terrible sufferings that slaves went through before being taken away. Also in Ouidah, we "inaugurated" the new road to the Seminary which is under construction for Pope Benedict's visit this November.