

Meeting Marian Network 2022

Review of the meeting in Einsiedeln

Here we present to the participants and all those interested a report on the meeting of the "Marian Network", an association of a total of 21 important Marian shrines in Europe, in the Swiss Marian Shrine and Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln. The meeting took place from September 27 to 30, 2022.

At this year's meeting, the following pilgrimage sites in Europe were represented: Brezje in Slovenia, Mátraverebély-Szentkút in Hungary, Mellieħa in Malta, Walsingham in England, Csiksomlyó in Romania, Vilnius in Lithuania, Zarvanytsya in Ukraine, Fatima in Portugal, Banneux in Belgium, Our Lady of Europe in Gibraltar and Einsiedeln in Switzerland. Due to the short notice of the organization (actually the meeting was to be held this year in Marija Bistrica, Croatia), interpreting services were not used. Unfortunately, the restriction to English as the sole language of communication made it impossible for some Marian Shrines to be present on site.

Tuesday, September 27, 2022

Spread over about 24 hours, the participants of this year's meeting of the "Marian Network" arrived in Einsiedeln. The five-member pilgrimage team of Einsiedeln, led by Father Philipp Steiner OSB, was able to welcome 17 representatives from 10 Marian Shrines in Europe to the spiritual heart of Switzerland.



After a welcoming aperitif, during which the joy of reunion was great, an international rosary prayer at the "Chapel of Grace" was scheduled. Under the gaze of the "Black Madonna" of Einsiedeln, prayers were offered in six different languages (Latin, German, English, French, Slovenian and Ukrainian) for peace in the world. The reason for this was the presence of the two representatives of the Ukrainian Marian Shrine of Zarvanytsya, who

were able to participate in the meeting despite restrictions due to the war.

At the dinner that followed the rosary prayer, the Abbot of the Territorial Abbey of Maria Einsiedeln, Msgr. Urban Federer OSB, was able to welcome the guests. During the following organ concert, which was arranged by the two Einsiedeln Benedictines Father Lukas Helg OSB and Father Basil Höfliger OSB, an impressively illuminated baroque Abbey Church could be experienced. At the following cozy get-together, all participants were finally together: nobody got lost on his way to Einsiedeln.

Wednesday, September 28, 2022



After the (optional) celebration of the monks' Lauds and breakfast in the guest wing of the monastery, followed a visit to the "DiaVision", which told the story of the Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln over a thousand years in sound and images and offered an insight into the present life of the monks. This was followed by a guided tour of the Abbey Church and other liturgical spaces of the monastery. The Holy Mass in the "Chapel of Grace"

was the liturgical highlight of this second day of the meeting.

In the "Great Hall" of the monastery, in the late morning and in the afternoon – interrupted by lunch – the presentations of the different shrines took place. For about 15 minutes, the representatives of each shrine had the opportunity to present the past three years and to share joys and sorrows with the other shrines. It was noticeable that almost all the shrines had begun livestreaming the services during the Corona pandemic and most of them still continue to do so. Thanks to God, pilgrims have returned to all shrines in the meantime, but the situation still needs to recover everywhere, and so the number of pilgrims in 2022 remained below that of 2019.



A well-deserved coffee break was followed by the participation in the monks' Vespers in the Abbey Church, which was concluded by the "Salve Regina" sung daily since 1547 at the "Chapel of Grace". In this way, the participants in the meeting were able to experience Einsiedeln as a "Benedictine pilgrimage site" in a very concrete way.

After vespers, the bus took them to the "Milchmanufaktur", the local show dairy, where the group was introduced to the secrets of cheese production during an entertaining and informative guided tour. At the subsequent dinner – accompanied by Swiss folk

music – various delicacies of Swiss cuisine could be enjoyed. The second day also ended with a pleasant get-together over a glass of monastery wine or a glass of beer from the local brewery.

Thursday, September 29, 2022

After a long second day, only a few made use of attending the Latin Lauds for the Feast of the Holy Archangels in the Abbey Church. After breakfast, the tour of the impressive Abbey Library and the newly established "Scriptorium" was on the agenda.



Afterwards, the meeting in 2023 was discussed in the "Great Hall". The choice was made for the Belgian pilgrimage site of Banneux, where the meeting will be held at the "Virgin of the Poor" from October 17-20, 2023. Fabian Delarbre, the representative of this Marian Shrine, conveyed the greetings of the rector, Abbé Leo Palm, and the anticipation of being able to host the meeting next year. An interesting question from the group was whether it

would be possible to simplify the meetings of the "Marian Network" in the future by generally dispensing with interpreters and agreeing on English (and possibly Italian) as languages of communication. This desire for simplification and direct communication, which could be practiced in Einsiedeln – because of the short notice – met with broad approval.



At 11:15 am the joint Eucharistic celebration with the monastic community was on the program. Abbot Urban presided as main celebrant at the festive service, which was also attended by some pilgrims. Gregorian chant filled the baroque church and Abbot Urban encouraged the rectors and their collaborators to be like the angels "messengers of the open heaven" at the individual shrines.

After the service, the representatives had lunch in the Refectory of the monastic community – followed by standing coffee, which provided an opportunity for exchange with individual monks. After lunch, those who had pending commitments in their shrines had to leave the good-humored group.

After a short siesta, the group went to the train station of Einsiedeln, where they boarded the train to Rapperswil. After a guided tour through the picturesque medieval town on Lake Zurich, the group took a boat trip to the nearby island of Ufnau, which belongs to Einsiedeln Abbey since the year 965 and has two romanesque churches. After evening prayer in the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul, dinner was enjoyed in the island's inn. The rain and cool temperatures – that accompanied the entire meeting – prevented a longer walk on the island. After returning to Einsiedeln, it was possible to talk about the impressions of the day over a glass of wine or beer and to prepare for the approaching farewell.



Friday, September 30, 2022

After the celebration of Holy Mass in the Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene and breakfast, it was definitely time to say goodbye. While those who had arrived by car departed individually, a minibus took those who had traveled by plane to Zurich, where they could visit the old town and the various churches together before the various flights from Zurich airport took everyone to their home country.



Even if the meeting of the "Marian Network" was – as always – much too short: everyone was grateful for the reunion after a twice corona-related interruption of the annual meeting.

Even if in Einsiedeln many things were somewhat simpler and therefore more familiar than in the past meetings of the "Marian Network": Everyone was impressed by the Swiss Shrine of Maria Einsiedeln, where for more than 1000 years marian devotion and monastic life have formed a unique symbiosis and created a "Benedictine place of pilgrimage" of a very special character.



Participants in the meeting of the "Marian Network" 2022 in front of the "Chapel of Grace" with the "Black Madonna" of Einsiedeln (from left to right):

Father Joe CARUANA, Mellieħa / Ms Andreja ERŽEN FIRŠT, Brezje / Father Philipp STEINER, Einsiedeln / Father Laurean Hugó GUIA, Csiksomlyó / Monsignor Philip MORGER, Walsingham / Mr Jonas ŠAVELA, Vilnius (above) / Mr Fabian DELARBRE, Banneux (below) / Father Ivan SICHKARYK, Zarvanytsya / Father Andrejus BOGDEVICIUS, Vilnius / Abt Urban Federer, Einsiedeln / Father Sándor Asztrik TIMÁR, Csiksomlyó / Father Carlos CABECINHAS, Fatima / Father Volodymyr FIRMAN, Zarvanytsya / Mr Saviour FENECH, Mellieħa / Mr Csongor SZERDAHELYI, Mátraverebély-Szentkút / Father Lóránt OROSZ, Mátraverebély-Szentkút / Father Robert BAHČIČ, Brezje / Monsignor Charles AZZOPARDI, Gibraltar / Mr André PEREIRA, Fatima / Ms Marlis BIRCHLER, Einsiedeln.

Not on the foto: Father Lorenz MOSER, Einsiedeln / Father Cyrill BÜRGI, Einsiedeln / Ms Ariane LALLI, Einsiedeln

*Abbey of Our Lady of Einsiedeln on October 7, 2022,
the Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary,
Fr. Philipp Steiner O.S.B.*