

The 1st meeting of the Korean Commission for Monastic Interreligious Dialogue

■ Date: Nov. 13, 2019

■ Place: Order of St. Benedict Waegwan Abbey

On Wednesday, November 13, 2019, the Korean Commission for Monastic Interreligious Dialogue held its first historic meeting in a small room on the first floor of the Waegwan Benedictine Monastery.

This group, which started with lunch after offering a daytime prayer together at the main chapel of Waegwan Monastery, was joined by Abbot Blasio Park of the Order of St. Benedict Waegwan Abbey, Fr. Anselmo Park (Waegwan Abbey), Sr. Marie Songmun Lee (Missionary Benedictine sisters of Tutzing Daegu Priory), Sr. HyoJu Kim (Missionary Benedictine sisters of Tutzing Seoul Priory), Sr. Eucaria Jung and Sr. Michael Yoo (Olivetian Benedictine sisters of Busan). After hearing from Abbot Blasio Park that the conference of Major Superiors of Korean Benedictine had decided to establish this last May, Fr. Anselmo Park shared the historical background and current state of DIM·MID (Dialogue Interreligieux Monastique/Monastic Interreligious Dialogue). Sr. HyoJu also shared about the experiences of the First International Dialogue for Buddhist and Christian Nuns, which took place October 14-19, 2018. We've coordinated opinions on the nature and goals of this meeting and mapped out a rough plan for 2020, the first year of our commission's activity.

Through such sharing, the commission decided to have regular meetings on a quarterly basis and the committee will be headed by Father Anselmo Park for the time being. In the first half of next year, the commission will publish a booklet to help Benedictine monks in Korea to understand interreligious dialogue, and in the second half of next year, it will prepare the education plan dialogue which will be held in Seoul, Daegu and Busan in the form of lectures on inter-religious dialogue and experience sharing of interreligious. In addition, it will seek to have a concrete meeting with Buddhist monks in the second half of the year.

Four communities of the eight Benedictine communities in Korea participated in this day's meeting. Thus, we will hold regular meetings at the Goseong, Masan and Namyangju monasteries that did not attend this meeting to encourage the interest and participation of this commission. The next meeting will be held in February 2020 at the Goseong Olivetan monastery.

In Korean society, various religions coexist peacefully and engage in dialogue and interactions between religions at the level of social justice. However, the deep exchange of spiritual experiences and sharing each other as contemplators is rather feeble. Therefore, we hope that this small gathering will become a valuable firestone and encourage meaningful inter-religious dialogue that will enrich each other.

Considering that our relationship with other religions is in the same context as how we accept others, we, as contemplators who are asked to live on an inter-cultural life today pray that all things come together and God's will come true through us.

Report by Sr. Michael Yoo (Olivetian Benedictine sisters of Busan)