**Update on Habits**

Brothers and Sisters,

As many of you know, we engaged a new vendor, Blue Tulip Tailoring, for habits after it became clear our previous vendor, St. Meinrad’s Archabbey, would not be able to continue servicing our orders.

Since approximately last Thanksgiving, we have placed 6 orders with the new vendor. We understood and accepted that the fit would not be as precise as those made by St. Menrad, and members may need to have basic alterations locally such as hemming the bottom and sleeves. The good news is that all 6 have been received. The bad news is that 5 of the 6 arrived requiring significantly more alterations than anticipated, including but not limited to 1) unusually excessive sleeve and hem length; 2) arm/shoulder/underarm seam incorrectly placed; 3) neck hole of scapular too small; 4) pocket mis-sized and positioned at the knees; and 5) collars too high and do not fit around the neck.

Because there were unclear expectations on the part of both parties, and due to a lack of clarity/specifics on details of the design by CSL, Sr. Julian and I have asked Sr. Mary Magdalene to pay our vendor for the work done. I have received an email drafted by Sr. Julian; early next week I will make any necessary edits and follow up with the vendor via email explaining the errors but acknowledging our part in them.

At it’s meeting on Tuesday, Council authorized up to $800 to reimburse members for alterations they will have done locally. Based on estimates by the members affected, this amount should be sufficient; if not, Council will be approached again as needed.

Also at that meeting, I presented 3 potential options for obtaining habits going forward and asked the Council to pray about them so we can make a decision at our July meeting on the 9th. I invite the entire community to do the same and let me know if you have any thoughts, including any other options you make think of. Those 3 options are:

o Give Blue Tip Tailoring another chance, with written expectations about attention to measurements provided and how those affect sizing of her pattern, etc.

o Sever ties with Blue Tip in favor of a cassock-style habit that can be purchased on the web from a recognized vendor such as Almy. I have already asked Sr. Mary Magdalene to start the process of setting up an account with them for altar supplies, so the cassocks could be direct billed as well. If we go this route, we would need to find someone to make scapulars. Sister is checking on this as well, from a seamstress she is consulting about veils. The average price from Almy is $300-$350 depending on stock/non-stock sizing. The lead time is about 12-14 weeks. I recently ordered my clerical cassock from Almy. I ordered a non-stock size, sent my measurements, and received it requiring no further alterations—which is often unusual given my height and build.

o Hybrid of the above—let BTT try a couple of orders and get the others elsewhere.