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# aim usa

The United States Secretariat of the Alliance for International Monasticism

[www.aim-usa.org](http://www.aim-usa.org)

Volume 27 No. 1 2018

[aim@aim-usa.org](mailto:aim@aim-usa.org)



Sister Anne Wambach, OSB, Prioress, Mount Saint Benedict Monastery, Erie, PA, participated in the Conference. The following are her reflections.

## Trip to South Korea with CIB

In September 2017, I had the opportunity to be part of an international delegation of Sisters sponsored by the CIB, *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum*, on a visit to South Korea and, particularly, the Benedictines who live there.

CIB is an organization of all Benedictine women's communities throughout the world. Every four years CIB holds a major symposium in Rome and delegates from its 19 regions attend and engage in mutual learning, sharing and the building of bonds of friendship and sisterhood.

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*“We have so much more in common with people around the world than we have differences.”*

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Between symposiums CIB offers opportunities for smaller groups of delegates to gather and enter into Benedictine life by visiting communities in countries around the globe. This year the country chosen was South Korea, home to over 1,000 Benedictine women in communities in Seoul, Daegu and Busan.

I was fortunate to be part of this delegation and had a marvelous two weeks meeting, visiting, engaging with our Korean sisters (and brothers, as we visited some male abbeys, also) and learning about an East Asian culture.

Only 10% of South Korea is Catholic and yet the effect of these communities is great and their faith is strong. Their ministries, primarily in education and health care, are a significant part of the life of the people there. Their monastic horarium is rich in prayer and Catholic liturgical life. They are also very friendly with their Buddhist neighbors as evidenced by a visit we had to a large Buddhist temple and training center where the sisters and Buddhist nuns were obviously friends.

Catholicism was brought to South Korea by lay people in the late 1700s. A strong part of their heritage lies in the life and death of the earliest Koreans who died for their faith. The Shrine of the Martyrs, particularly, is a place where they can remember and rever-

ence St. Andrew Kim, the first Korean-born priest and the other martyrs who perished with him.

Although 70% of South Korea is mountainous, the cultivated fields and crops are a significant part of the monastic life there. All of the communities are engaged in gardening and living with and from the land. One community tends over 1,600 pear trees as a major source of income.

While there we were very aware of the present tension between North Korea and the U.S. The sisters told us that they have lived with tension between the two Koreas for all of their lives. It is a great source of sadness to them. In fact, one community has a Holy Hour of Prayer every week in their monastery for the unification of North and South.

I found the Sisters in South Korea very warm, friendly and welcoming. Their Benedictine hospitality was exemplary! At the end of our stay they especially wanted us to know that our presence was a sure sign to them that spoke of peace and solidarity. Even lay people we met made the same comment.

We have so much more in common with people around the world than we have differences. Let us continue to pray for and work for peace in our world.



*The CIB (Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum) Conference was held in South Korea September 8-18, 2017. Moderator, Sister Judith Ann Heble, OSB, Sacred Heart Monastery, Lisle, IL and council worked together with the Benedictine communities in South Korea (Olivetian Benedictine Sisters of Busan, and the Missionary Benedictine Sisters, Daegu Priory and Seoul Priory) to make this conference possible.*



## Notes Worth Quoting

We are sincerely grateful for the box of books we have received from AIM through your effort and generosity. Thank you very much for sending us good books from known authors and good writers. They will truly enrich the hearts and minds of our sisters.

More blessings to you and to AIM!  
Sr. Ruth, OSB  
Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing  
Tanzania, East Africa

Books of all types help our community members to develop, maintain and enhance the culture of reading. By reading books we develop our English language, especially our younger members, because English is the medium of communication when we attend workshops, meetings, and seminars. Apart from that, books about our Faith and Religion edify us with regard to our spiritual and monastic wellbeing. When I get something that will benefit the community I translate it and share it with the whole community. Books help us to be knowledgeable and, therefore, boost our self-confidence as Benedictine Sisters.

Sister Mary Bonaventure Tshabalala, OSB  
Congregation of Benedictine Sisters of Twasana, South Africa



Dear Rev. Sister,

Cordial greetings from Kurisumala Ashram! The books which you sent recently have arrived in excellent condition. We really appreciate your kindness and thoughtfulness in keeping in mind our request. Thank you very much! Please thank the donors on our behalf, and also those who worked behind the scenes.

With fraternal regards and prayers,  
Bro. Augustine (Secretary)  
Kerala. India

Dear Sister,

Some days before, we received a huge parcel heavy with books. I unpacked them together with my community, distributed them to the different book shelves, and recommended for reading first of all.

Thank you so much for the precious gift. It has been a long time since we received the last parcel with books. I am superior in this community here, former prioress of Ndanda Priory and a missionary medical doctor. All my life I encourage sisters to read books and tell them it is impossible to be a good Benedictine without reading books. Our thanks and prayers to you and all the members of AIM USA. May God bless us all and help us to bring about a culture of mutual respect and peace.

Yours in Christ,  
Sr. Raphaela OSB  
Mtwara /Tanzania

Sister Bonaventure from the Congregation of Benedictine Sisters of Twasana writes in their newsletter:

*"BECOSA (Benedictine Communities of South Africa) organised a workshop for the Benedictines in formation in South Africa for one week, with the financial assistance of AIM. It was held at Inkamana Abbey. The attendance was very good. From our Convent we sent three postulants, our novice mistress, and two sisters who are teachers."*



Dear Sister,

Good news! Today, this afternoon, we finally have got the books! With no fee! WONDERFUL! This series of Ancient Christian writers is awesome! May God bless and reward AIM and all the donors!

Please be assured of our prayers,  
S. Agniete, OSB  
Kaunas, Lithuania

Greetings from Benedictine "Word Incarnate Presentation Monastery" Egume Idah Diocese, Kogi State, Nigeria, West Africa and all the nuns here. With sincere appreciation and thanks that comes from the depth of the heart, we remain ever grateful to AIM USA for your assistance of books. We must confess that your donation of the books was received with gratitude and they are very useful especially the Catechism of the Catholic Church which our postulants are using for doctrinal studies.

We are aware of the difficulties and inconvenience you went through to collect these books, notwithstanding these difficulties you still help us. Thank you very much. May the good Lord replenish your generosity. Be reassured of our constant prayers for your intention and for the full realization of your mission on earth.

Sister Eberechukwu Emeagwara, OSB  
Word Incarnate Presentation Monastery

Dear Sister,

I am very grateful to AIM USA for the donation we have received: a box with books and magazines in Spanish. I am sure these books are going to be useful especially now that we are getting new vocations. Books both in English and in Spanish will be useful for our continued formation as there are four monks of our community able to read books also in English. What you offer to us is a great gift for our young community. Thank you very much for your continued support.



Fr. Alex Echeandia Loro, OSB  
Monastery of the Incarnation  
Lima, Perú



### Mosteiro da Santissima Trindade, Santa Cruz do Sul, Brazil

Brasil is a country of continental dimensions, facing the Atlantic Ocean. It has a very rich biodiversity from the Amazon Forest to the north and to the Pampa to the south. Many cultures, ethnicities and languages form the Brazilian people, such as Indigenous, Portuguese, African, German and Italian. Portuguese is the official language of the country.



*Harvesting honey*

The Mosteiro da Santissima Trindade (Monastery of the Holy Trinity) is located in the southern region of Brasil in the center of the State of Rio Grande do Sul that borders Argentina and Uruguay. Its inhabitants are called “gauchos”. The typical drink of the gaucho is the chimarrão, made from the mate-herb leaf (*Ilex paraguariensis*). In the gaucho culture it is a welcome sign to offer a chimarrão to those who arrive. Gauchos are known as hospitable and workers.

The Monastery of the Holy Trinity was founded on January, 25th, 1997, in the Diocese of Santa Cruz do Sul through a request made by Bishop D. Aloísio Sinésio Bohn to our founder Me. Abbess Paula Ramos, OSB. In 2013 the Monastery was incorporated into the Benedictine Congregation of Brazil as a Simple Priory, dependent to the Abbey of Our Lady of Glory.

Situated on an elevated site and surrounded by an environmental preservation area in a subtropical climate region, our Monastery offers a beautiful view of the Rio Pardinho River Valley. Through silence and contact with nature

which invite prayer it is sought by lay people, religious and youth for retreats. Throughout the 21 years since its foundation, our community offers much to the Church of Santa Cruz do Sul. We



*Offering chimarrão*

make a specific contribution in the area of liturgy, and in the formation of lay people and seminarians. Through the apostolate of hospitality, we help to overcome violence and to build solidarity and peace. Because it was founded by German immigrants, the city of Santa Cruz do Sul is a special part of the ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans. In order to keep Christian values alive and to be a witness of unity and mutual respect, our Monastery is present in ecumenical celebrations such as the World Day of Prayer for Women (WDP). Our work is recognized for the preservation of culture and local values by supporting colonial tourist routes that aim to preserve the culture of the region and increase local commerce.

Since its foundation, our community has received support from friends and collaborators who keep alive the spirit inherited from immigrants. Our Monastery maintains itself through the workshops of iconography, handicrafts, restoration of images, mosaics, liquor, biscuits, honey, a small guest house and donations.



*Learning mosaic technique*

*Benedict saw the entire world in a single ray of light. (Dialogues)*



### Abbey of Our Lady of New Clairvaux, Vina, CA

Our community of 17 monks, dedicated to the Trappist-Cistercian lifestyle, was founded in 1955 as the fifth foundation of Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky. The monastery complex is a village-style layout that lends itself well to our Northern California climate in the fertile Sacramento Valley. Financial support comes from our orchards: 107 acres of prune trees (as part of the Sunsweet Growers cooperative), 307 acres of English walnut trees, and a small but thriving vineyard.



The New Clairvaux property is rich with California history dating back to 1844, when Peter Lassen obtained a 22,000-acre land grant for Rancho Bosquejo from the Mexican Government. According to local tradition, Lassen planted a one-acre vineyard around 1846 with vine cuttings from the Franciscan Missions near Los Angeles, having travelled there by horse to obtain these historic cuttings.

Henry Gerke purchased Rancho Bosquejo in 1852 and increased the vineyard to nearly 100 acres, producing fine wines and brandy. His winery in northern California predates the famed Napa Valley wineries.

Governor Leland Stanford purchased the land in 1881, increasing the property to approximately 59,000 acres and dubbing it Vina Ranch. Stanford's Ranch became the largest vineyard and winery in the world, covering 3,575 acres, but the climate proved more suited to brandy-making with the vines he had chosen. He instituted Stanford University in 1885, which was initially funded by proceeds from Vina Ranch.



When we arrived in 1955 the land was being used for dairy farming, which our community continued until 1964. Today, our monastic community continues the double legacy of winemaking and historical significance. Of our 586 acres, the 15-acre vineyard is managed and cultivated by the monks—including an annual blessing of the grapes. We have incorporated a fully operational winery and tasting room, all under the New Clairvaux label and partnered with the celebrated Sunseri winemaking family of Napa Valley. Vineyards have been part of the Cistercian tradition from the beginning, when our order's founding house, Citeaux Abbey, acquired around 1110 the vineyard that would eventually become Clos de Vougeot in the Burgundy wine region.

July 2018 will see the consecration of our new Abbey Church. Its principal segment is the historic Chapter House (c. 1190) from the Cistercian Abbey of Santa Maria de Ovila, which encompasses a magnificent triple-arched Gothic entry. The Cistercian Bishop St. Martin de Finojosa played an active role in the building of Ovila, and promoted the Cistercian French Gothic architectural style in Spain. William Randolph Hearst acquired this edifice in 1930, dismantled and shipped it to San Francisco. As circumstances—namely The Great Depression—stalled its reconstruction, the Chapter House stones languished in Golden Gate Park until they were finally awarded to New Clairvaux in 1994. Completion of the Chapter House sets a new historic marker; it is the oldest building west of the Mississippi. To chant daily the *Opus Dei* in this outstanding structure is a tremendous grace for us.



## AIM USA Welcomes New Board Members

AIM USA welcomes four new members to the Board of Trustees: Abbot Stanislaus Gumula, OCSO, from Mepkin Abbey, Moncks Corner, SC; Brother Paul Richards, OSB, from St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, MN; Sister Michael Marie Rottinghaus, OSB, from Immaculata Abbey, Norfolk, NE; and Abbott Neal Roth, OSB, from St. Martin's Abbey, Lacey, WA.

**Father Stan Gumula** is the abbot of Mepkin Abbey, a Trappist monastery near Moncks Corner, South Carolina. He is a native of Philadelphia, PA, where he was born in 1941. He attended private grade and high schools in the Philly area. After graduating High School in 1959, he entered the monastic community at Mepkin where he has been ever since. He did philosophical and theological studies at Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky during the early 1960s; he was privileged to study under Dan Walsh, Thomas Merton and John Eudes Bamberger. He has been Junior Director, Novice Director, and Business Manager at Mepkin and at present is the Abbot.



MyNameis**SisterMichaelMarieRottinghaus**. With a last name like this, one can tell I am from true German stock. My mother, and my father's grandparents immigrated to the USA.



My religious heritage also came with them to the 'new' country. We were planted in the area of the country where the Atchison Benedictine Sisters, Priests and Brothers were the main religious taking care of the faith needs of the people in a wide area of Northeast Kansas.

Having been educated under the Benedictines, a religious vocation came to birth. After graduating from a Radiologic technology school, I entered the Missionary Benedictine Sisters, Norfolk, NE in 1963.

I worked in healthcare for the first 20+ years of my religious life while assuming various kinds of leadership in community as well as in the health services.

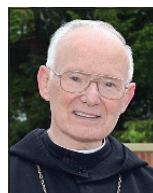
In 1993 I had the joy to receive my first call to foreign missionary service. With a group of four other Missionary Benedictine Sisters we traveled to China to begin an apostolate in healthcare ministry. I remained there for 15 years, then was called to Kenya, Africa by my sisters who elected me Prioress. There I stayed for the next eight years. In 2016 I returned to my home community of Missionary Benedictine Sisters in Norfolk, NE.

**Brother Paul Richards O.S.B.**, a 1978 SJU graduate, is a monk of Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville Minnesota. He comes from a family of 16 on the Iron Range of northern Minnesota. He joined Saint John's Abbey in 1978 after



completing his bachelor's in music and education from Saint John's University. Br. Paul earned a master's degree in choral conducting from the University of Iowa. His principal work assignments while a monk have included teaching at Saint John's Preparatory School and Saint John's University, serving for nearly 20 years as a faculty resident in the residence halls at SJU, conducting the Saint John's Abbey Schola, and serving the abbey as subprior and formation director. Br. Paul founded The St. John's Boys' Choir in 1981 and served as music director for 26 years. He began the Saint John's Abbey Benedictine Volunteer Corps in 2003 and continues now as its director. More recently he created an English as a Second Language program at Saint John's Abbey which draws Benedictine Monks and diocesan priests from around the world to study English at Saint John's.

Br. Paul brings to AIM an awareness of monasticism lived around the world. By way of his concertizing with The St John's Boys Choir, his supervision of Benedictine volunteers worldwide and his work in ESL he has been to over 50 monasteries in 17 countries.



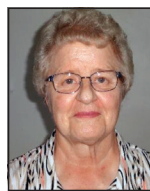
**Abbot Neal Roth, O.S.B.** is the major superior of the Abbey of St. Martin's, president of St. Martin's Abbey Corporation, chancellor of Saint Martin's University and long-standing member of Saint Martin's University Board of Trustees. He received a Master of Divinity at Mt. Angel Seminary in Mt. Angel, Oregon and a Master of Education at the University of Portland.

Abbot Neal entered St. Martin's Abbey in June of 1957 where initially he worked in the gardens and attended to the chickens. After college graduation, he joined the faculty at Saint Martin's High School. After seminary he moved to Saint Martin's College teaching English and Education. During the 1980's, he was associate pastor, then pastor, at Sacred Heart Church in Lacey, WA, tending to a congregation of some 2,000 families.

Over the years Abbot Neal has served the Abbey as subprior, novice master, prior, guest master, Oblate director, Corporate Secretary and as a member of the Senior Council.

In May 1993, he was elected Abbot. As major superior, he oversees the day-to-day operations of the Abbey and St. Martin's Abbey Corporation.

His faith in the Abbey's mission to develop and sustain Saint Martin's University can be seen in the many University events in which he either participates or officiates. For Abbot Neal, "The values taught at Saint Martin's are the values that everyone should have: ethics, service and community."



CIB Moderator, **Sister Judith Ann Heble, OSB** from Sacred Heart Monastery, Lisle, Illinois, USA noted in the CIB Newsletter #13, December 2017: "*The Korean Peninsula remains in much need of prayer. On September 14<sup>th</sup>, though on a bus, we joined Benedictines for Peace in a Holy Hour for Peace in Korea and for Nuclear Disarmament. Throughout the prayer service, we chanted "Seek Peace and Pursue It". Let us stand in solidarity with our Korean brothers and sisters and pray that the blood of their heroic martyrs who gave their lives for Christ may bring about a harvest of peace for the Korean Peninsula and renew in these days the faith they helped to establish.*" ([www.benedictines-cib.org](http://www.benedictines-cib.org))



## Lent 2018 Grants

Through the response of many monasteries and generous donors, AIM USA is able to make the following grants possible:

### Education

- In Brazil formation studies will be provided for Camaldolese men and women.
- A brother in Peru will pursue studies in theology.
- A group of monks and nuns in the Congo will take theological classes.
- Three brothers from the Ivory Coast will be able to study theology.
- Two sisters in Uganda will be provided a formation course.
- Six monks from India will study theology.
- In the Philippines three communities of nuns will take part in a formation and retreat program.

### Ecumenical Program

- An opportunity for Monastic Interreligious Dialogue (DIM-MID) will be provided.

### Community Prayer

- Sisters in India will purchase materials for prayer for themselves and their retreat house.

### Community Living

- After an earthquake, Sisters in Mexico will be able to repair their monastery.
- Sisters in Burkina Faso will construct a wall around their monastery for safety.

## Additional 2017 Monastery to Monastery Members

St. Scholastica Monastery  
St. John's Abbey  
Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey  
St. Walburga Monastery  
Abbey of the Genessee  
St. Benedict's Monastery  
St. Benedict's Monastery  
St. Peter's Abbey Oblates

Chicago, IL  
Collegeville, MN  
Dubuque, IA  
Elizabeth, NJ  
Piffard, NY  
Snowmass, CO  
Winnipeg, MB  
Muenster, SK

*AIM USA is grateful for all who support us in our efforts to respond to the needs of monasteries throughout the world. Every gift is a blessing and important to us—no matter how large or small—and we in turn hold you in prayer.  
Please remember AIM USA in your will.*

*Thank you*

*We are all descended from the same Benedictine roots. We have all grown up in differing ways with various callings, customs and challenges, listening to the needs of the Church and God's people. The diversity among us is an abundant gift to the Church in countless ways" Sister M.*

**Enosh Cho, OSB** Prioress General Olivetan Benedictine Sisters of Busan, CIB Newsletter #13, December 2017



## Annual Board Meeting

The AIM USA Board of Trustees gathered for its annual meeting on October 20, 2017, at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery in Erie, Pennsylvania.



*(seated, left to right) Fr. Joel Macul, Christ the King Monastery, Schuyler, NE, Sister Mary White, OSB, St. Paul Monastery, St. Paul, MN, \*Abbot John Klassen, OSB, Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, MN*

*(standing, left to right) Sister Theresa Zoky, OSB, Executive Director, Mt. St. Benedict Monastery, Erie PA, \*Abbot John Brahilla, OSB, President, Marmion Abbey, Aurora, IL, Sister Mary David Hydro, OSB, Holy Name Monastery, St. Leo, FL, \*Sister Pia Portmann, OSB, Immaculata Monastery, Norfolk, NE, Mother Maureen McCabe, OCSO, Mt. St. Mary's Abbey, Wrentham, MA, Sister Anne Wambach, OSB, Mt. St. Benedict Monastery, Erie PA, Absent: Sister Nancy Miller, OSB, V-President, Annunciation Monastery, Bismarck, ND*

*\*Completed six years of service to AIM USA Board Thank you.*

## Mass Offerings

AIM USA sends Mass Offerings to both male and female Benedictine, Trappist and Cistercian monasteries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. These offerings are extremely important to our mission Monasteries. Thank you

## Visit Our WEB Page

Visit our web page at [www.aim-usa.org](http://www.aim-usa.org) for exciting information on AIM USA's commitment to developing monasteries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

### Staff Contacts

#### Executive Director:

Sister Theresa Zoky, OSB  
[director@aim-usa.org](mailto:director@aim-usa.org)

#### Office Manager:

Sister Ann Hoffman, OSB  
[aim@aim-usa.org](mailto:aim@aim-usa.org)

#### Coordinator Missionary Cooperative Program:

Sister Therese Glass, OSB  
[missionary@aim-usa.org](mailto:missionary@aim-usa.org)

**AIM USA Phone: 814-453-4724**

**Visit us at: [www.aim-usa.org](http://www.aim-usa.org)**

**Cover:** Photo of a tapestry that hangs in The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood Convent, The Republic of South Africa. Photo by Father Gérard T. Lagleder, OSB.



United States Secretariat—Alliance for International Monasticism

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*Benedict saw the entire world in a single ray of light. (Dialogues)*

Dear Friends,

In the “*Dialogues*,” Gregory the Great tells us that “*Benedict saw the entire world in a single ray of light.*” As followers of Benedict we, too, are called to see the world—all things—in “*a single ray of light*” for we are all united in God’s love.

By sharing with each other the varied ways of living the Rule of Benedict in different cultures, in different countries, with different joys and challenges, new ideas and understandings are brought to light. Friendships are forged and gifts are shared.

A manifestation of “*the whole world gathered*” is fostered in the CIB\* Handbook which states as one of its goals, “*...to promote mutual support and exchange of ideas and experience among Benedictine women on an international level...*” At their meetings Benedictine women from around the world gather to share their oneness, their experiences and learn from their similarities and differences.

CIB members take these new ideas back to their communities and into the surrounding areas where their communities reside, thereby spreading the light and love of Christ in new ways to those with whom they work and to whom they minister. Let us keep these women in prayer and look for ways that we might bring our world together in “*a single ray of light.*”

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***May all we do be evidence of our commitment to work for peace and justice.***

***May we be committed to bringing all people: vowed Benedictines, Oblates, benefactors, friends, family, the poor, the marginalized, all classes, all religions, all people, together in peace.***

***May we, with St. Benedict, see “the entire world in a single ray of light”.***

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\*CIB (*Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum*). Please refer to Sister Anne Wambach’s article on page 2.

*Theresa Zoky, OSB*

Sister Theresa Zoky, O.S.B., Executive Director, AIM USA  
director@aim-usa.org