
aim usa

The United States Secretariat of the Alliance for International Monasticism

www.aim-usa.org

Volume 28 No. 1 2019

aim@aim-usa.org

Renew
the
face
of
the
EARTH

...that all may have what they need!



Notes Worth Quoting

Messages from Book Donors to Executive Director of AIM USA

Dear Sr. Ann,

I've sent books to AIM USA for the missions in the past. From Sr. Michael Marie I learned I should send books for the missions in your name. Yesterday I sent three boxes of books through the Post Office by media mail. You should receive these within five days. If you can make use of them they can be for any mission in the world. I would be glad to know when these arrive. Thank you. God bless you and all your good work!

Sr. Catherine
Missionary Benedictine Sisters
Norfolk, NE USA

Dear Sister Ann,

I am clearing several boxes of books from our campus these days. So as not to waste your time (or our postage budget), I would like to send you, periodically, lists of books that we could send to AIM USA. Besides today's email there would be 6-10 such messages throughout the calendar year mostly within the year.

Thank you for your consideration and service!

Fr. Cyril Gorman
Saint John's Abbey
Collegeville, MN USA



Messages to AIM USA from recipients of books

Dear Sister,

Greetings from the Nuns of Presentation Monastery. With great joy we are notifying you that we received the box of books you sent to us. With sincere appreciation and thanks that comes from the depth of the heart we remain ever grateful to AIM USA. The books are very much useful to all the nuns. We must confess that your donation of books was received with gratitude. Once again thank you so much. Be reassured of our constant prayer.

Yours sincerely,
Sister Scholastica Otti, OSB
"Word Incarnate" Presentation Monastery
Kogi State, Nigeria

Dear Sisters,

I wish to give you so much more than just a thank you note for the beautiful gift we received from you—a box of books. Thank you for loving us. Receive our love in return.

Sr. Mary Assumpta, OCSO, Librarian
Abbey of Our Lady of Praise
Butende Masaka-Uganda

Dear Sister,

I am happy to inform you that a box of books has arrived. All good books! And in good condition, too! Our community, especially our students, will greatly benefit from the books you have sent. Many thanks for this precious gift.

Abbot John Kurichianil, OSB
St. Thomas Benedictine Abbey
Kappadu, Kerala India

Dear Sister,

We have received the books for our community at Ormoc City, Leyte, Philippines. Thank you very, very, much. We shall keep in touch and tell you about our ministry here.

Sister Mary Vincent Feliciano, OSB, Superior
Community of Benedictine Sisters
St. Peter's College
Ormoc, Philippines

Climate Crisis and Humility: Benedict's teaching as a guide



Anne McCarthy, OSB
Mount St. Benedict, Erie, PA

The science is clear: urgent, radical actions are needed for our threatened planet. For that, we need a deep transformation of how we are as humans on the earth: humility. Joan Chittister, OSB published a book last year that translates Benedict's teaching on humility for our time: *Radical Spirit: 12 Ways to Live a Free and Authentic Life*. Her teaching enables us to apply Benedict's steps of humility to the climate crisis we face.

1 Keep the reverence of God, creator of the earth and the heavens, always before us.

The stance of reverence for all begins with this relationship.

2 Don't follow our own will or live for ourselves, but accept our role as co-creator.

This is the opposite message from our culture of consumerism and apathy.

3 Seek direction from the wisdom of the earth.

The earth has wisdom, has insight, can teach us how to live. For example, trees teach us the importance of community and diversity.

4 Endure in the struggle for the planet and accompany those who are persecuted in their fight for eco-justice.

Communities of color and those in poverty will suffer most from climate change. Many environmental activists have paid with their lives.

5 Acknowledge the harm human activity—including my own—is doing to the planet.

This acknowledgement is both personal and communal.

6 Renounce entitlement to an unjust share of the planet's limited resources.

The attitude that we, especially in the US, "deserve" better is evident in our massive emissions.

7 Let go of the arrogance and narcissism of the anthropocentric world view.

8 Honor and learn from the traditions of the earth.

One example: natural ecosystems are renewable and produce no waste.

9 Cultivate silence and listen with the heart to all of creation.

Heart listening takes time, space and openness.

10 Never ridicule, reject or render invisible any part(s) of creation.

What part(s) of creation do I take for granted? Ignore?

11 Raise our human voice to communicate clearly for our common home.

Our voice is needed at every decision-making table and in the streets.

12 In all times and places, live in reverence.

In this step of humility, the fully-human, humble one bows in reverence—with eyes fixed on the earth—in the chapel, the monastery, the garden, on a journey, and in the field. This step of humility is the model of love capable of fueling the transformation needed now.



TAKE ACTION!

Sylvestro-Benedictine Monks in Sri Lanka

In 1845 the Sylvestro-Benedictine monks came over to Ceylon as missionaries. Monsignor Joseph Maria Bravi OSB was the first to arrive.

Their first mission was in the Southern vicariate of Colombo. They opened schools and colleges together with churches and served people.



In 1886 the monks came over to the hill in Kandy. The abbot and the abbey was initiated in Kandy. Later they moved to the monastery in Ampitiya, Monte Fano which was originally built in 1927 for the student monks.

At present the monks engage themselves in the following apostolates – serving in parishes, ministering in the schools and colleges, conducting programs for other religious and diocesan clergy and above all participating in interreligious dialog. Sri Lanka as a nation is blessed with four major religions – Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.

There are six communities in our priory.

Monte Fano: This is our mother house, the seat of the Conventual Prior and the house of formation. We have a retreat center, St. Benedict's College, situated in the precincts of Monte Fano.

Adisham: It is the novitiate of our priory. There is a holiday cum retreat house attached to the monastery.

St. Anthony's Church, Wahacotte: The monastery is situated totally in a farming parish.

St. Anthony's College, Kandy Community:

The monks are engaged in the mission of educating the young, and in formation of seminarians.



Sacred Heart Parish, Colombo: The parish is situated in the capital city of Sri Lanka.

St. Anthony's Parish, Thoduwawe: The parish is in the fishing locality where all the parishioners are Catholics.

Since the arrival of the monks in Sri Lanka our Sylvestro-Benedictine life in Sri Lanka has rolled by for the last 175 years. Most of the monk-priests are qualified in various fields and serve in important institutions. They serve in the educational field and in the ecclesiastical universities and also conduct religious formation programs in the monastery and elsewhere.

Our monks minister in a multiethnic, multireligious and multicultural country. We have created a niche in the hearts of Sri Lankans.



Words and Actions Bring Life

On Easter Sunday, a day of joy at the celebration of Resurrection of Jesus, terrorists struck Sri Lanka. About 290 were killed; 500 injured, most Catholic/Christians. The Sylvestro-Benedictine monks featured in "Meet a Monastery" are safe.

In the words of Fr. Shamindra, Prior "This is the first time the Church faced such kind of terror in Sri Lanka. I still believe that this incident in no way reflects the general attitude of the nation or a particular religious or ethnic group toward the Church. This is the work of a small would-be Islamic extremist terrorist group. Let's keep praying for the dead, the wounded and the grieved families – our brothers and sisters in the faith. All religious leaders have come forward to condemn this act and in support of the Church."

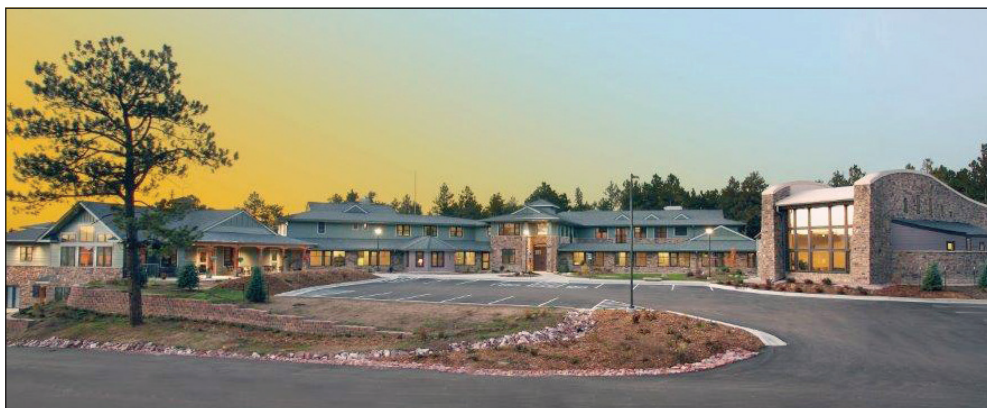
In the words of another monk: "These days, I am especially praying for the suicide bombers, for their conversion."

Let us uphold all the people of Sri Lanka. Let each of us, in all that we do, choose words and actions that bring life.

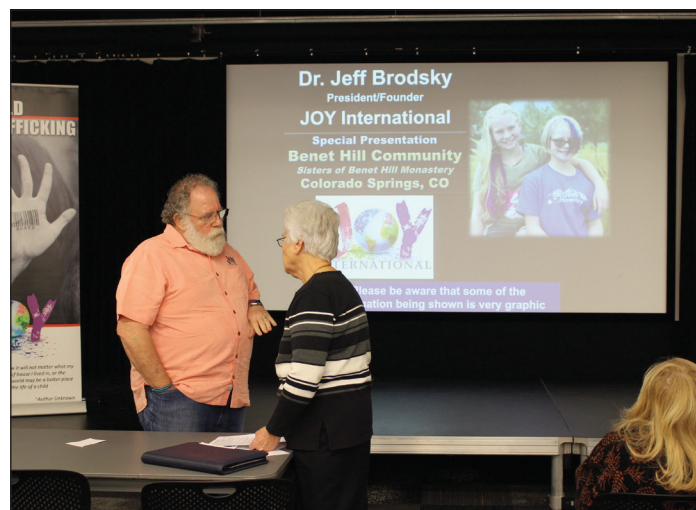
Benedict saw the entire world in a single ray of light. (Dialogues)

Benet Hill Monastery, Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA

Benet Hill Monastery, nestled among the majestic ponderosa trees of the Black Forest in Colorado Springs, Colorado, enthusiastically responds to the Gospel call to Peace and Justice. The community of 29 Benedictine Sisters celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2015. They came to Colorado as teachers; however, their ministries diversified over the years to respond to the needs of the people of God.



The community is involved in “welcoming the foreigner.” When the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) initiated the request to send Sisters to help with



the refugee population at the southern border, Sister Clare Carr, Prioress, and the community asked Sister Evangeline Salazar if she would answer the call.

Sister Evangeline worked with local volunteers and numerous Sisters from many religious communities at Nazareth, one of the refugee centers under the direction of Annunciation House in El Paso, Texas. Most of the volunteers spoke both English and Spanish which was most helpful as most of the refugees only spoke Spanish.

When the Border Patrol releases refugees onto the streets of El Paso from the detention center, the individuals helping with the ministry provided by Annunciation House immediately respond. The various hospitality centers, such as Nazareth, provide the refugees with food, shelter, and assistance in contacting families or friends. The refugees are given every assistance, so they can depart to their ultimate destination where they will await and prepare for their immigration court hearings.

Benet Hill is also involved with the Colorado Springs Sanctuary Coalition, an ecumenical group of churches and religious organizations whose mission is to “make the Pikes Peak region a safer place for immigrants by protecting those facing deportation and advocating for immigrant communities.” Coalition volunteers are trained to accompany immigrants to court hearings or to help a host church providing sanctuary for individuals facing deportation. Kevin McTernan, Director of Mission Advancement, represents Benet Hill on the coalition board’s Education and Outreach Committee.



Since 2016, the community has provided educational programs both on and off site to raise awareness and combat human trafficking. These programs have evolved through the efforts of Sister Rose Ann Barmann, who is working with other groups, including Catholic and Episcopal parishes, to establish a local residence for traffic survivors.



Art

Rule of Benedict, Ch. 57

*If there are artisans in the monastery,
they are to practice their craft with
all humility, but only with the
prioress'/abbot's permission...
...so that in all things God may
be Glorified.*

(1 Pt 4:11)

Beauty and joy, urgency and need can be expressed through art. AIM USA seeks artwork for use in its mailings and newsletters. If you have original art that AIM USA may use in depicting your community, country, and culture please send **JPG** or **JPEG** photos to:

AIM USA
345 East 9th Street
Erie, PA. 16503
aim@aim-usa.org

Alliance

As fresh life springs from the earth
like a garden's promise in spring
so shall God make justice and praise
spring up before all nations.

(Is. 61:11)

Monastics chant this Canticle of Isaiah, savor the words, embody its spirit and bring forth praise and justice with God into the reality of life. The manner in which they do it is transformative, renewing. One community in Sri Lanka is awakening energy through interreligious dialogue between Buddhist, Hindu, Islam and Christian groups. They embody the promise of acceptance and reverence. A community in the USA welcomes refugees, creating deep, supportive relationships. They are providing food, shelter, protection and supportive guidance as refugees find a home in a new land. One monastic from Erie, PA offers information on how climate change affects every form of life and how we can make a difference. Monastics hear and respond to the Spirit's call to **RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH**.

Awareness

*If we do not care for water on the
surface of the earth, life will die!*



Photo: "Our Lady's Newsletter" Benedictine Sisters of Grace and Compassion, Brighton. Used with permission.

New Board Member

Sister Anne Shepard, OSB has been a professed Benedictine since 1967. Most of her ministries have included Catholic education where she served as teacher, principal and superintendent of diocesan schools. Within her community she has served on multiple committees and planning task forces. She served as prioress of her community from 2005-2017. Currently, she serves as the administrator of Monasterio de San Benito, a small community of Benedictines in Mexico City. With a doctorate in Peace Studies from Columbia University, she is active in rallying support for DACA students. Her travels have included trips to many European countries, West Africa, all coasts of Brazil and other countries in Central and South America.



Sister Anne Shepard, OSB

Because she grew up in Washington, D.C. and spends summers working on the Jersey Shore, she loves to swim, visit New York and experience the nation's capital. Reading and playing with children are her next favorite pastimes. Welcome Anne and thank you!

Additional 2018 Monastery to Monastery Members

St. Scholastica Monastery	Boerne	TX
Monastery of the Holy Spirit	Conyers	GA
St. Meinrad Archabbey	St. Meinrad	IN

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 for exciting information on AIM USA's commitment to developing monasteries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Responding to the Spirit

Thank you for your generous response to our 2019 Lent Appeal. You listened and responded to the call. Through your response, AIM USA was able to fund the Lenten grants.

We are preparing for our next appeal. The needs of our brother and sister monastics worldwide are many. Being aware we cannot do everything, we can do something. The Gospel story of the "Widow's Mite" is a good reminder of this truth. The staff at AIM USA reviewed proposed grants presented by the AIM International office. We chose requests from monasteries from each continent; we selected grants that were for men, for women, and some that would include a mixed group. We attempted to assess the priority of need as well as greatest impact. And so, the grants chosen include formation and education – individual and community; as well as collaboration among communities and regions. They also include projects that sustain life such as a generator and livable housing.

We are grateful to you and hold each of you in prayer. Please hold our brothers and sisters in prayer.

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

Dear Friends,

*“Choose life that you may be a leaven
for the human family; then shall you
live in peace as justice bears the gift of
freedom throughout all the world.” **

In the Church year, we have just completed the seasons of Lent, celebration of Easter and Pentecost – the Spirit setting us afire.

In our world we have experienced times of darkness. We have seen and felt the effect of climate change: evidenced by extreme flooding in India; Cyclone Idai in Mozambique – resulting in the deaths of hundreds and the destruction of entire towns, affecting more than 2 million people; in the USA there have been hurricanes, fires, floods and snow—resulting in damage that will cause loss of food from farms and wine from vineyards.

And yet, not all is dark. As you read throughout this newsletter, people are making a difference. Change is happening one person; one community at a time. It gives me hope! It sets me afire!

And so, what does it call me/you to do? I believe it calls each of us to take at least one action to bring about positive change; to live the beatitudes. We can't do everything. We can do at least one thing! On the personal level, it can be as simple as greeting the stranger or giving a kind word to the checkout clerk. We can SEE, acknowledge and RESPECT those around us.

We can commit to the use of only environmentally friendly products. We can decrease our consumption. We can simplify our lives.

We can stand with those who are speaking for justice, adding our voice, our time, our talents, our prayers.

One person makes a difference; together, we can change the world!

Then the world will be changed and set aflame with love!

Sister Ann Hoffman, OSB

Sister Ann Hoffman, OSB
Executive Director, AIM USA
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