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LIKE A FLAME



MY HOPE IS BURNING

Like a flame

The theme of this newsletter is Jubilee! Pope Francis has proclaimed a Jubilee Year with the theme PILGRIMS OF HOPE. Benedictines are also celebrating Jubilees elsewhere. Articles have been edited by AIM USA staff with the permission of the authors.

HOPE – What Inspires Hope in Me?

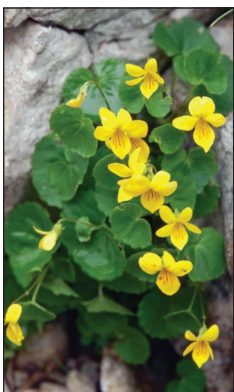
Hope is the active expectation that God will heal and transform the world. Hope does not mean the denial of suffering or injustice, nor does it mean that human beings are able to heal creation apart from God's gracious empowerment. Rather, hope is based in what God has promised to do in the future, and it calls us to witness to those promises in actions of healing and justice in the present. When we are tempted to lose heart because of all we see in the present, we are called to remember the future that God has promised and press forward in hope.

Jurgen Moltmann

Thank God for this perspective offered by Jurgen Moltmann! I need this future oriented perspective in order not to get stuck in the despair of the current realities in my own country and in our world. I am and can be hopeful, not in a naïve or reality-denying way, but in the way of faith in God's promises.

I know that spring will come, despite the snow and ice of today. I know that morning will come, no matter how dark the night is. I am assured that there are good people in this world whose love can outweigh the hate seen in far too many places and circumstances. I have seen that love at work in those who care about and seek to improve the plight of those in seemingly hopeless circumstances.

Poetry often helps me see from a fresh perspective. This excerpt from a poem entitled "Violet," by Edwina Gately, provides such a hope-filled outlook:



*I saw, on the freeway's edge,
peeping out from a tiny crevice
in the great concrete slab,
a tiny golden violet,
miraculously waving,
and smiling at me –
defying pollution and roaring traffic
with a magnificent display
of fragile beauty.
God – reminding me of resurrection.
And hope.*

(from the poetry collection, *Soul Whispers* by Edwina Gately)

Who are the violets peeping through the concrete in our lives? Who and what reminds us to keep looking beyond the obvious to the promises of God? For me at this point in my life, knowing of the life and witness of Abbess Klara Swiderska and her sisters in Zhytomyr Ukraine who have endured more than 3 years of war in their country, who know firsthand and by reports of many having been tortured and maimed and killed -- how can they hope in the

Sister Lynn McKenzie, OSB is the President of the Monastic Congregation of Saint Scholastica and the moderator of Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum representing Benedictine women around the world.



midst of such hatred and destruction, such inhumane and unjust actions? Where are the violets peeping through the concrete for them?

After the war began, one of the sisters in the Zhytomyr monastery wrote of their life from the perspective of faith in resurrection in the face of war and death. She said that "every war is like a long Good Friday." She likened their daily life as living the Stations of the Cross. She wrote that continuing to pray in the face of the war, the senseless killing and tragedy, was a struggle. "How could we persevere in prayer? Despite the sense of desolation and the cry of incomprehension... despite the sirens and airstrikes, despite the unknown of the next moment, as if by inertia, we continued the common prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours, and later realized how this prayer kept us. It gave inner strength and a sense of peace."

If these Ukrainian nuns, all the while with bomb sirens going off and the deafening sounds of destruction echoing in their ears, can find their way to prayer, in the tradition of the church in the Liturgy of the Hours, then surely I, in much less obviously desperate circumstances, can remain faithful to prayer in my own monastery. The witness of these Benedictine women in Ukraine helps give me a healthy perspective in my own life. Whatever stations of the cross there are in my life and in those around me, we can faithfully keep moving forward, believing that Jesus, the Paschal Mystery, leads us through into the promise of resurrection.

A Benedictine sister in Kentucky wrote: "Hope is a God-given gift that brightens whatever and whoever it touches, and if each of us does our part, hope can truly "spring eternal." (Colleen Winston, OSB) Let us be hope, let us watch for signs of hope like the violet breaking through the concrete of life, *in a magnificent display of fragile beauty*, and may our lives be a witness to this sign of hope, of resurrection. May we be so convincing in our belief in God's promises that others also can see signs of hope breaking through, no matter how long the night.

Lynn McKenzie, OSB
Sacred Heart Monastery
Cullman, Alabama, USA

my hope is burning

Pilgrims in Hope . . . Peregrinantes in Spem



“Peregrinantes in Spem,” meaning “Pilgrims in Hope,” invites us to embrace an attitude of hope as we embark on a pilgrimage, whether through physical journeys or inward reflections. This concept underpins the founding of Kristo Buase, a monastic community established in response to the Catholic Church’s longing for a sanctuary to address the spiritual needs of its people, along with offering retreats for clergy and laity. This aspiration arose after numerous attempts to establish a monastic presence in Ghana.

When the chief of Tanoboase generously donated land, it appeared uninhabitable due to its rocky terrain. However, the monastic community transformed this challenging landscape into fruitful agricultural land, providing job opportunities for residents in the surrounding towns of Tuobodom and Tanoboase.

In the years leading up to the establishment of the Techiman Diocese, which was carved out of the Sunyani Diocese, the monastic community, despite being cloistered, had the essential role of welcoming both Catholics and new converts for catechesis. This commitment resulted in the birth of hundreds of neophytes for Mother Church each year, until the bishop established a parish in Tuobodom and a rectorate in Tanoboase.



The initially inhospitable rocky land has been transformed by the unwavering hope of the monks, drawing many to this once desolate location. The community has established a strong presence, evidenced by the regular attendance at the conventual mass on Sundays. This stresses the continuing need for a monastic church and guesthouse, which would provide a space for the faithful to seek solace and rejuvenation, aptly described as coming from “beneath the rock which is Christ,” the literal translation of Kristo Buase.

Kristo Buase has emerged as one of the largest cashew producers in Ghana, providing significant employment to many. The community, strategically located in the centre of the country,

also features an abode that serves as a tranquil retreat, offering spiritual nourishment to visitors. Over the years, the community has focused on empowering local women, particularly single mothers, by providing training in various trades and artisan skills to help them earn an income. Additionally, they have built a school to serve children in the area, ensuring access to education for those who previously had to travel long distances. Through educational scholarships for less-endowed students, this initiative is bringing hope and opportunities for a brighter future to many children.

Hope is not the attitude that says “things probably won’t go wrong” but the belief that in all events, for the person who is open to the work of the Holy Spirit, grace is working to draw the good out of the events. Kristo Buase embodies this profound sense of hope that inspires both personal growth and spiritual development. Since its inception, the community has served as a beacon of hope, welcoming not only Catholics but individuals from all walks of life.

The monks play a pivotal role in this welcoming environment, encouraging visitors through their hospitality and shared experiences as God’s Children. Those who join in this pilgrimage of hope seek to deepen their understanding of its significance, recognizing that hope is a fundamental cornerstone in their spiritual journey toward God.

Dom Louis Osei Kwadwo, OSB
Kristo Buase Monastery
Ghana

The Jubilee Logo



The logo shows four stylized figures, representing all of humanity, coming from the four corners of the earth. They embrace each other to indicate the solidarity and fraternity which should unite all peoples. The figure at the front is holding a cross. It is the only sign of the faith which this lead figure embraces, but also of hope, which can never be abandoned, because we are always in need of hope, especially in our moments of greatest need. There are rough waves under the figures, symbolizing the fact that life’s pilgrimage does not always go smoothly in calm waters. Often the circumstances of daily life and events in the wider world require a greater call to hope. That’s why we should pay special attention to the lower part of the cross which has been elongated and turned into the shape of an anchor which is let down into the waves. The anchor is well known as a symbol of hope. In maritime jargon the ‘anchor of hope’ refers to the reserve anchor used by vessels involved in emergency maneuvers to stabilize the ship during storms. It is worth noting that the image illustrates the pilgrim’s journey not as an individual undertaking, but rather something communal, marked by an increasing dynamism leading one closer to the cross.

Source: The Vatican website

Like a flame

Beacons of Hope: Stories of Resilience and Renewal

In the heart of Metro Manila, where towering skyscrapers cast shadows over makeshift dwellings, the Benedictine Sisters offer a sanctuary of hope. Tuluyan San Benito—St. Benedict Shelter Home for the Homeless—stands as a refuge for those forgotten by society. Here, the homeless find more than shelter; they rediscover dignity.



Among them is Manuel, a former street vendor who lost everything to illness. When he first arrived at Tuluyan San Benito, he was hesitant, burdened by the weight of rejection. But then Sr. Theodora Bilocura, OSB welcomed him as Christ Himself, offering a warm meal, a place to rest, and the simple dignity of a shower. As he rinsed away the grime of the streets, he felt something he had long forgotten—hope. Slowly, he began to reclaim his sense of self, finding strength in the kindness of those who saw his worth beyond his circumstances.

Far from Manila, another crisis unfolded in the wake of Typhoon Pepito. In the devastated province of Catanduanes, homes lay in ruins, livelihoods washed away. The Benedictine Sisters, through the Priory Disaster Response Committee (PDRC), answered the call. Sr. Theodora, and Sr. Matthea Husmillo, OSB, led a mission team to reach remote villages. In Barangay Suchan, where the typhoon had left families with nothing but debris, they delivered rice, marine plywood, and roofing sheets—simple yet life-saving supplies.

One of the villagers, Lorna, wept as she received a bundle of shelter materials. “I thought we’d never rebuild,” she whispered. But as neighbors came together, hammering nails into salvaged beams, hope took shape amidst destruction. The Sisters did not just bring aid; they reignited the spirit of resilience in the community.

Hope shone again in the wake of another calamity—the eruption of Mt. Kanlaon. Ash rained down on villages, suffocating crops and displacing families. From December 13-16, 2024, the Benedictine Sisters mobilized relief efforts in Negros Occidental. With the support of Sr. Maria Ezechiel Fernandez, OSB, and volunteers



from the Kauswagan Center, they distributed face masks and clean drinking water to over a thousand families.

In the evacuation center, seven-year-old Paolo clung to his mother, coughing from the ash. When a sister handed him a bottle of water, his wide eyes lit up. “Salamat po,” he whispered shyly. In that moment, the simplest gesture—clean water—became a lifeline.

As the year drew to a close, on December 30, 2024, Mother Mary Thomas, OSB, Prioress led another relief mission to the isolated barangay of Mailum, Bago City. They arrived not just with supplies, but with presence—with love. In a town still blanketed by despair, they reminded the people that they were not alone.

Through every meal served at Tuluyan San Benito, every home rebuilt in Catanduanes, and every breath of clean air offered in Negros, the Benedictine Sisters live the Gospel. Their mission is clear: to be Christ’s hands and feet, bringing light to the darkest corners of suffering. In their acts of service, hope is not just given—it is reborn.

Sr. Rosalina Fajardo, OSB
St. Scholastica Priory – Manila
Manila, Philippines



my hope is burning

How our Monastery is a Sign of Hope

Almost everyone who comes to our guest house perceives something different, something in the atmosphere surrounding it and in the sacred place of the Church, which makes them feel and exclaim: What peace!

Certainly, the order, the cleanliness, the green environment, the light and fresh breeze moved by the trees help to transmit a beauty that fills with nostalgia for heaven and at the same time makes the divine present.

As a hostess, I am amazed to see that even children, as if on the sly, look for this place to run around and, once discovered, they do not want to leave it. The other day, I asked a little girl who was running with her bicycle why she came here to play, and she told me without thinking with childish freshness: because it is beautiful!

We live in a so-called rural area, two hours from the capital of Lara State in Venezuela, and our contemporary history as a country is full of contradictions.

As believers, Christians and women consecrated to the service of God, through continuous prayer, we are not oblivious to anything that is happening. Our mission, from the field of faith is quite clear: we become sisters and mothers of all men and women of this time, through the space of welcome for personal and community



Sr. María Antonia with a group of neighboring children, greeting Jesus in our abbey church.

retreats, sharing our continuous praise for those who are on pilgrimage in this world with us. From our poverty, but also from our human and spiritual capacities enriched by the grace of God, we offer what we have to the poor every week, as well as being a small source of employment for some unemployed neighbors.

We also realize that, although we cannot eradicate the structures that impoverish many,

we can change ourselves, in a tension towards conversion of life that makes us live more intensely the reality. Although this dynamic of spiritual struggle is necessary and keeps us active, it cannot remain sterile when the main purpose is to follow Christ, to die and rise with Him who has saved us precisely through hope.

As long as the monastery rooted in love can remain in these Venezuelan lands, we will be able to be witnesses of the love that points to the definitive heaven, with our “stable” presence, towards that destiny of peace, joy and happiness that we carry engraved in our hearts and to which we have all been called without distinction.

Sister María Antonia Pérez, OCSO
Trappist Monastery of Our Lady of Coromoto
Humocaro Alto - Municipality Morán - Lara State -
Venezuela

Mass Offerings

AIM USA sends **MASS OFFERINGS** to Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries in Asia, Africa, Latin America the Caribbean and Eastern Europe. These offerings are extremely important to them, especially in these times. If you wish to remember someone who has died or have another intention, please send it to:

AIM USA
345 East 9 Street
Erie PA 16503 USA

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Please make checks payable to: **AIM USA**.

Send to: **345 East 9 St. Erie, PA 16503**
or use our PayPal account

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Like a flame

Let the Flame of Hope Blaze



I am deeply honored and delighted to reflect on the theme of *Pilgrims of Hope* as we journey through this Jubilee Year. Pope Francis' call to embrace hope as the anchor of the soul resonates profoundly with our monastic life and mission.

As *Pilgrims of Hope*, our monastery strives to be a beacon of light and mercy in a world often overshadowed by uncertainty and despair. Hope, as the Holy Father reminds us, is not a passive waiting but an active commitment to love and serve others, especially the most vulnerable.

In our daily lives, we seek to embody this hope through prayer, hospitality, and works of mercy.



One of the ways we live as *Pilgrims of Hope* is through our ministry of prayer. In the silence of our cloister, we lift up the needs of the world, trusting in God's providence and mercy. Our prayers are offered for the sick, the lonely, the refugees, and all who feel abandoned or forgotten. We believe that our intercessions,

though hidden, are a powerful source of hope for those who may never know our names but are touched by God's grace.

Hospitality is another way we manifest hope. Our monastery opens its doors to pilgrims, seekers, and those in need of spiritual refreshment. Whether through retreats, spiritual direction, or simply offering a listening ear, we strive to create a space where others

can encounter Christ, the source of all hope. Many who come to us are burdened by life's challenges, and it is our joy to remind them that they are not alone – that God walks with them and that hope is always alive.



Works of mercy are also central to our vocation as *Pilgrims of Hope*. We support local charities, visit the elderly in nursing homes, and provide assistance to families in need. These acts of love, though small in themselves, are seeds of hope that we pray will bear fruit in the lives of those we serve. We also collaborate with other religious communities and lay organizations to amplify our impact, recognizing that hope is best nurtured in communion with others.

In conclusion I hope these images would capture the essence of our mission as *Pilgrims of Hope* — rooted in Christ, united in love, and reaching out to a world in need of His light.

May this Jubilee Year be a time of profound renewal for all of us, as we journey together toward the eternal hope of Heaven.

Sr. Elizabeth Pallikkara OSB (Superior)
Vallombrosan Benedictine Sisters (India)

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my hope is burning

Golden Jubilee of the Indo-Sri Lankan Benedictine Federation (ISBF) A Celebration of Monastic Fraternity: 1975-2025

The Golden Jubilee of the Indo-Sri Lankan Benedictine Federation (ISBF) was celebrated on February 17, 2025, at the Asirvanam Benedictine Monastery in Bangalore, India. This brought together monks and nuns from Benedictine communities across India and Sri Lanka to reflect on the spiritual journey of the past fifty years and renew their commitment to the monastic way of life. The President of the Federation, Fr. James Mylackal, OSB of Navajeevan Monastery in India and the Prior Fr. Jerome Naduvathaniyil, OSB of Asirvanam Monastery welcomed the gathering.

Archbishop Mar Matthew Moolakkatt, OSB expressed his appreciation of the steady growth of the presence of the Benedictine men and women in the two countries.

Benedictine tradition continues to flourish in the midst of a Buddhist Culture alongside the country's deep-rooted Christian faith.

The Purpose of the ISBF: Strengthening Monastic Life in the 21st Century

The ISBF provides a spiritual platform for its members to:

- Deepen fraternity and unity among monastic communities.
- Engage in theological and spiritual reflection to discern and respond to the challenges of monastic life today.
- Foster mutual learning and support, drawing from the rich experiences of different communities.



- Organize ongoing formation programs for those in initial formation and for formators.
- Exchange resources – both spiritual and material- to help monasteries thrive.

Each year, the federation conducts study sessions and retreats, providing monks and nuns with opportunities to reflect, learn and grow in their

A Vision Rooted in Benedictine Spirituality

The Indo-Sri Lankan Benedictine Federation (ISBF) was founded fifty years ago with a clear vision: to foster unity, collaboration, and spiritual enrichment among Benedictine monasteries in India and Sri Lanka. At its core, the ISBF is not merely an administrative body but a spiritual family that seeks to deepen St. Benedict's vision through prayer, study, and communal support.

Today, the federation has expanded to include 15 Congregations and is strengthened by over 100 monastic communities. More than 700 monks and nuns across the two nations dedicate themselves to the Rule of St. Benedict, embracing a life of *Ora et Labora* – prayer and work- within the rich cultural and spiritual landscapes of India and Sri Lanka.

India, a land of diverse religious and philosophical traditions, offers a unique environment for monastic life, where the Benedictine charism finds harmony with the contemplative spirit deeply embedded in Indian spirituality. Sri Lanka, known as the Pearl of the Indian Ocean, has long been a land of monastic heritage, where the

vocation. These initiatives are rooted in the Benedictine call to stability, conversion of life, and obedience, ensuring that the monastic way remains vibrant and relevant in the face of modern challenges.

Marching Forward in Faith and Gratitude

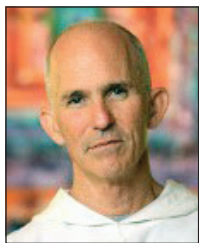
As the ISBF celebrates fifty years of monastic collaboration, we give thanks to God's providence, the hard work of the pioneers, the generosity of benefactors especially the AIM USA and AIM Vanves, FRANCE, well wishers, and the wider Church who have supported this journey. The call to seek God together remains at the heart of our mission, and we move forward with renewed faith, deeper commitment, and unwavering hope in the monastic path.

The journey continues, guided by the wisdom of St. Benedict, as we strive to live as authentic witnesses of the Gospel, united in prayer and love, ever seeking the face of God.

Fr. James Mylackal, OSB (Syl)
ISBF President

Like a flame

A Common Word



I was pleased to have been invited to preside, preach, and present at the 50th anniversary meeting of the Indo-Sri Lankan Benedictine Federation meeting at Asirvanam Monastery in Bangalore, India, February 17-21. On the last day, I was there in my role as the new Secretary General of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue (DIMMID) and asked to speak on “The

Importance of Interreligious Dialogue in the Monastic Life Today: Our Role and Response.”

I presented two “framing devices” which I wove together throughout my talk. The first came from Gianni La Bella, the head of the Sant’Egidio Community who told me that he thought monasticism had four gifts to offer the world and modern religion in this era, which are both so caught up in materialism. (By materialism he meant both consumerism and a lack of a sense of transcendence.) Our four gifts according to him are: an austere non-consumerist lifestyle, a witness to the unity of the human race, a life based on *ora, labora, and studia*, and interior peace that leads to exterior peace.

I then presented the four types of dialogue that the Church bases her work on through the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue: the *dialogue of life*, when people engage others in their community in an exchange of daily joys, problems, and concerns; the *dialogue of action*, the call to cooperate with people of other faiths in projects of mutual interest; the *dialogue of theological exchange*, when we study each other’s theology, spirituality, history, and philosophy; and the *dialogue of religious experience*, when people share spiritual practices, such as prayer and contemplation, with others of different faiths. Though it is that last one which is the main mandate for DIMMID, I showed how I thought all of those types of dialogue applied to our life as monks and especially in the context of Sri Lanka and India. For the rest of my talk I leaned heavily on Popes John Paul II and Francis as well as, of course, “Nostra Aetate”-In Our Time.

Tensions are very high between Muslims and Christians especially in the state of Kerala, for various reasons, which has led to a string of violent incidents. So, I started out by singing a line from Qur’an 3:64 in Arabic, and then a refrain inspired by a famous document written by Islamic scholars to Pope Benedict in 2006 called “A Common Word”: “People of the Book, / let us come to a common word, / that God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God and God in them.” And I added, “We don’t need peacemakers when there is no war. In the same way we would not need interreligious dialogue if religions were in harmony.”

It was such a joy to spend time with our nuns and monks from Sri Lanka and India, who could not have been more gracious and hospitable. It was also deeply formative to have it emphasized once again how different our cultural contexts are, and how respectful we need to be to each other’s sensibilities and existential situation, never offering pat answers and platitudes.

Fr. Cyprian Consiglio, OSB Cam
Secretary General – Monastic Interreligious Dialogue
Rome, Italy

Hymn for the Jubilee Year 2025



Pilgrims of Hope

Original text: Pierangelo Sequeri

English translation:

Andrew Wadsworth

Music: Francesco Meneghello

*Like a flame my hope is burning,
may my song arise to you:
Source of life that has no ending,
on life's path I trust in you.*

*Ev'ry nation, tongue, and people
find a light within your Word.
Scattered fragile sons and daughters
find a home in your dear Son.*

*God, so tender and so patient,
dawn of hope, you care for all.
Heav'n and earth are recreated
by the Spirit of Life set free.*

*Raise your eyes, the wind is blowing,
for our God is born in time.
Son made man for you and many
who will find the way in him.*

Monastery to Monastery 2024

Monastery	City	State
Christ in the Desert	Abiquiu	NM
Mt. St. Scholastica	Atchison	KS
Marmion Abbey	Aurora	IL
Assumption Abbey	Ava	MO
St. Benedict Monastery	Bakerstown	PA
Belmont Abbey	Belmont	NC
St. Benedict's Abbey	Benet Lake	WI
Incarnation Monastery	Berkeley	CA
Holy Cross Abbey	Berryville	VA
Annunciation Monastery	Bismarck	ND
Monastery of Our Lady of the Desert	Blanco	TX
St. Scholastica Monastery	Boerne	TX
St. Benedict Monastery	Bristow	VA
St. Scholastica Monastery	Chicago	IL
Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration	Clyde	MO
Conception Abbey	Conception	MO
Benet Hill Monastery	Colorado Springs	CO
Monastery of St. Gertrude	Cottonwood	ID
St. Walburg Monastery	Covington	KY
Our Lady of Angels Monastery	Crozet	VA
Sacred Heart Monastery	Cullman	AL
St. Bernard Abbey	Cullman	AL
Sacred Heart Monastery	Dickinson	ND
Our Lady of Mississippi	Dubuque	IA
St. Scholastica Monastery	Duluth	MN
St. Walburga Monastery	Elizabeth	NJ
Mt. Michael Abbey	Elkhorn	NE
Mt. St. Benedict	Erie	PA
Monastery Immaculate Conception	Ferdinand	IN

my hope is burning

Monastery to Monastery 2024

Monastery	City	State
St. Scholastica Monastery	Ft. Smith	AR
St. Lucy's Priory	Glendora	CA
St. Emma Monastery	Greensburg	PA
Glastonbury Abbey	Hingham	MA
Our Lady of Dallas Abbey	Irving	TX
Monastery of the Ascension	Jerome	ID
St. Martin's Abbey	Lacey	WA
St. Vincent Archabbey	Latrobe	PA
Emmanuel Monastery	Lutherville	MD
The Dwelling Place Monastery at Mt. Tabor	Martin	KY
Mepkin Abbey	Moncks Corner	SC
Queen of Angels Monastery	Mt. Angel	OR
St. Peter's Abbey	Muenster	SK, Canada
House of Bread	Nanaimo	BC, Canada
St. Gertrude Monastery	Newark	DE
St. Paul's Abbey	Newton	NJ
Immaculata Monastery	Norfolk	NE
St. Bede Abbey	Peru	IL
St. Scholastica Priory	Petersham	MA
Abbey of the Genesee	Piffard	NY
Our Lady of Guadalupe Monastery	Phoenix	AZ
Mt. Savior Monastery	Pine City	NY

Monastery	City	State
Woodside Priory	Portola Valley	CA
Abbey of St. Gregory the Great	Portsmouth	RI
St. Martin Monastery	Rapid City	SD
Assumption Abbey	Richardton	ND
St. Mary Monastery	Rock Island	IL
Christ the King Priory	Schuyler	NE
Santa Rita Abbey	Sonoita	AZ
St. Benedict Monastery	St. Joseph	MN
Holy Name Monastery	St. Leo	FL
St. Paul's Monastery	St. Paul	MN
Abbey of Gethsemani	Trappist	KY
St. Joseph Monastery	Tulsa	OK
Abbey of New Clairvaux	Vina	CA
St. Anselm's Abbey	Washington	DC
Mother of God Monastery	Watertown	SD
Our Lady of the Redwoods Abbey	Whitethorn	CA
St. Benedict's Monastery	Winnipeg	MB, Canada
Transfiguration Monastery	Windsor	NY
Holy Cross Monastery	Woodville	TX
Mt. St. Mary Abbey	Wrentham	MA
Sacred Heart Monastery	Yankton	SD

Charting a Future for AIM



Benedictine men and women in poor countries. It has also developed into the premier forum for monastic exchange among the Benedictines, the Cistercians and the Trappists, bringing together the biggest monastic families of the Catholic Church. During a recent meeting in the Spanish monastery of Poblet, we took stock of this situation and decided that it was time to review the way AIM is run. That is an exciting project, and we hope to make its different dimensions more effective: the promotion of formation for monastics everywhere, the raising and distribution of funds for solidarity projects, and also the platform for exchange and reflection on the future of monastic life.

A great opportunity for a wider sharing and listening exercise will come up in the year 2028/29 when the Benedictine family will celebrate 1500 years since the foundation of Montecassino. Historians will tell us that the date is somewhat approximate, but 529 has traditionally been considered the year when St Benedict moved from Subiaco to Montecassino and established the monastery where he completed his work, fulfilled his journey and where his legacy has been kept alive for a millennium and a half. The Benedictine abbots decided last year that this jubilee shall be celebrated not just in Italy but across the whole world, wherever Benedictines live and make a difference.

In 1964, Pope Paul VI visited Montecassino and spoke about the impact which St Benedict and his disciples had on creating Christian civilization. In his letter "Pacis Nuntius" – Messenger of Peace – he

described how they did this "with the cross, the book and the plow". These three objects stand for the dimensions of our monastic life and our contribution to the world: Faith and Evangelization, Education and Culture, Material Civilization and Progress. When Pope Paul VI wrote this, he was still mostly thinking about the history of the West, and in fact the same letter proclaimed St. Benedict Principal Patron of Europe. Since then, however, Benedictine monasticism has become much more global. AIM is an expression and agent of this, and I think it should have an important role in shaping and promoting this jubilee.

In recent times, global networks have come under increasing pressure. In many parts of the world, parochialism is gaining the upper hand. Borders are emphasized



Abbey of Monte Cassino by Marella Rebgetz.

and international cooperation is becoming a dirty word. USAID seems to be folding up, with nefarious consequences for hundreds of thousands of people. I am hearing about the impact of this first hand from our Benedictine hospitals in Tanzania. AIM USA is a testimony for a Christian and Benedictine ethos that is resolutely based locally, in monasteries, places and regions, and yet also hears the cry of those far away. God created us as a global family. I believe that the testimony of AIM was never more important!

Abbot Primate Jeremias Schroeder, OSB
Sant' Anselmo
Rome, Italy



United States Secretariat—Alliance for International Monasticism

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

Pope Francis proclaimed 2025 a Jubilee Year with the theme *Pilgrims of Hope*. It is a time to both reflect and celebrate. In these times of global struggle, challenge and crisis, we are called to live Hope. And so, what does that mean?

- ✝ Hope is a fundamental cornerstone in the spiritual journey toward God
- ✝ In acts of service, Hope is not just given – it is reborn
- ✝ Be witnesses of love towards the peace, joy and happiness to which we have all been called - without distinction
- ✝ Have an active commitment to love and serve others, especially the most vulnerable
- ✝ Hospitality is a manifestation of Hope
- ✝ Embrace Hope as the “anchor of the soul”

Let each of us be Pilgrims of Hope!

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