

aim usa

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神與我們同在

Shén yǔ wǒmen tóng zài
Chinese

Dios está con nosotros

Spanish

معنا الله

allah maana
Arabic

God is with us.

English

神は私たちと一緒にです

Kami wa watashitachi to isshodesu

Japanese

Θεός είναι μαζί μας

Theós éinai mazí mas

Greek

ונתיה סיהולא

Hebrew

Dieu est avec nous

French

Gott ist mit uns

German

கடவுள் நம்முடன் இருக்கிறார்

Katavul nam'mutap irukkirār.

Tami

Mungu yu pamoja nasi

Swahili

भगवान हमारे साथ है ।

bhagavaan hamaare saath hai

Hindi

Deus está conosco

Portuguese

하나님은 우리와 함께

hananim-eun uliwa hamkke

Korean

Thiên Chúa là với chúng tôi

Vietnamese



New Abbot Primate



Abbot Gregory Polan, OSB

On 10 September 2016, Abbot Gregory Polan, OSB, of Conception Abbey, was elected Abbot Primate of the 1500-year-old Benedictine Order at the Congress of Abbots meeting in Rome. He is the tenth abbot primate, the fourth American to be elected, and the second abbot from Conception Abbey.

As abbot primate of the Benedictine Confederation, Abbot Gregory will be the unifying head of the world's 7,000 Benedictine monks and become the abbot of the monastery Sant'Anselmo in Rome, where he will reside.

The office of abbot primate was created by Pope Leo XIII in 1886 to serve the Benedictine community as its liaison to the Vatican and civil authorities, to promote unity among the

various autonomous Benedictine monasteries and congregations, and to represent the order at religious gatherings around the globe. This election is an honor for both Abbot Gregory and Conception Abbey. Abbot Gregory has led Conception Abbey for almost 20 years as its abbot and served as president-rector of Conception Seminary College for ten years prior. A scholar in Scripture and theology, Abbot Gregory has been prominent in the field of Biblical translation.

"Abbot Gregory brings many years of leadership experience and spiritual wisdom to the role of abbot primate. We are happy that his gifts, which he has given so freely at Conception Abbey for many years, will now be shared with the entire order and Church," commented Fr. Daniel Petsche, OSB, prior of Conception Abbey. (Excerpts taken from anselmianun.com)

The Benediction world is grateful for the leadership of Abbot Notker Wolf, OSB, the outgoing Abbot Primate. Abbot Notker has served as Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Confederation since 2000. AIM USA wishes to thank Abbot Notker for his many years of service as he returns to his home abbey of St. Ottilien.



Notes Worth Quoting



Dear AIM,

As a member of the Associates of Iowa Cistercians, (AIC) a religious and spiritual group associated with Our Lady of the Mississippi Monastery, OSCO in Dubuque, Iowa and New Melleray Monastery, OSCO in Peosta, Iowa, receiving AIM USA [newsletter] is both informative and humbling—hearing about and supporting God's work among us unites us.

Thank you and God's blessings,
Archie Greene

Dear Sister,

Greetings from Our Lady of Victoria Monastery in Uganda, East Africa. Many thanks indeed for the books you sent us by Post Office. We have just received them this evening. It's a joy to know you are thinking of us.

I and the community of Our Lady of Victoria wish you a joyful Easter season.

Fr. John Bosco Kamali, Abbot
Our Lady of Victoria Monastery
Uganda, East Africa

Dear Sister,

Thank you very much for your kind consideration sending the valuable Spiritual books. We do appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity towards us. We are extremely grateful and keep you in our thoughts and prayers.

Wishing you a Happy and Holy Easter! Please remember us in your prayers and keep in touch with us.

With much love and appreciation,
Sister Lucy
Sahayamatha Convent, India



Just a few words to say a big thank you for the box of books we received from you. The books are all written in English and quite enriching, too. They are exactly the type of books we need for our spiritual life and for the formation of the young ones, too. We have already started using some of these books for our table readings in the refectory. Thanks a lot.

We shall forever remain grateful to you for all your support both physically and spiritually. Our special regards to you and to all those working with you and those who donated the books to us. May the Good Lord continue to shower His blessings on you, your loved ones and on all those who made these books available for our use. Their sacrifices are highly appreciated.

Sr. M Ozioma Offor, OSB
Nativity Monastery, Nigeria

Dear AIM,

Best Greetings for this Paschal Season which is upon us. At long last, your donation and request for Masses arrived here in Cuernavaca. I wonder about its travels, as it took over two months to get here. We gladly accept this kind gesture and Father Benito is celebrating the Masses in our chapel for the intentions of the donors.

Here in the tropics, we have built a small greenhouse for the cultivation and production of orchids, which grow very nicely here, added to which there is a modest market, so with your donation we are able to make the world more beautiful as well as energize a small cottage industry we have here at the monastery. We are presently a community of ten solemnly professed monks, with 4 simply professed, 5 novices, and postulants who come and go. It is a vibrant, young community, and we would be glad to receive any visitors who wish to spend some rest and retreat time with us. God Bless You for your generous gift and prayers.

In Christ's Love,
Konrad Schaefer, OSB
Monasterio Benedictino de Nuestra Señora
de los Angeles
Cuernavaca, Mexico

Sisters United and Reunited in Mission

AIM USA staff member Sr. Therese Glass, OSB interviewed Sr. Philomena Fleck, OSB and Sr. Michael Marie Rottinghaus, OSB who presented mission appeals for AIM USA in June of 2016 at St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Carney's Point, NJ. Their responses to Sr. Therese are below.

How did you first become aware of missions?

Sr. Philomena: I used to get the Maryknoll booklet as a child and I was always interested in the children in other lands, especially in Africa. We used to give \$\$ for the less fortunate. In my hometown, Newton, NJ, we had Missionary Benedictines and I learned about their missions. I was always drawn to a deeper understanding of other cultures and saw them as enriching ours.

Sr. Michael Marie: From little on, I don't exactly know when, I was interested in "going to the missions". I had cousins in the Franciscan order and heard from them about missionary work. My mother was an immigrant to the US and perhaps that somehow spiked my interest. All of that formed a desire within my heart which grew and matured into a full-blown missionary vocation.

What is your Benedictine Community and what have been your ministries through it?

Sr. Philomena: My monastery, St. Walburga, Elizabeth NJ, has teaching ministries in inner city as well as suburban and rural areas. As teacher, principal and DRE, I have worked with children and families from many varied ethnic backgrounds in 50+ years in education. I have been enriched by the diversity of cultures and religious traditions. My experience in Africa was life-changing in a myriad of ways. Mutual sharing helped me become a more compassionate, grateful and joyous Benedictine.

Sr. Michael Marie: My community is the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing. Over the course of my 50+ years in the community, I worked in our hospitals as an x-ray technologist and I have been a Superior in one of our smaller communities as well as a novice directress. In 1993, I had my first mission assignment outside the United States as the one in charge of founding a community and helping to establish a hospital in China. I worked there for 15 years; then I was called to Karen-Nairobi, Kenya to be Prioress for the youngest Priory of our Congregation, Sacred Heart Monastery, which was then over 25 years old. I fulfilled 2 terms as prioress and in May of 2016, I returned home to be of assistance at the Priory in Norfolk, NE.

How did the two of you first meet?

Sr. Philomena: In 2008 in Nairobi, Kenya we met through an experience with the African Women's Commission of AIM USA. Sr. Michael Marie had just arrived to be Prioress. We were blessed with her openness and welcome. Our experiences were rich as we visited missions and worked with the Junior Sisters.

Sr. Michael Marie: Through the generosity of AIM USA, Sr. Philomena and Sr. Sarah Schwartzberg came to our Priory during my term as prioress in Nairobi to give teachings on Benedictine Lectio and other topics to more than 25 of our temporary professed Sisters. Now most of them are in active ministry in our schools and health-care centers. We were most grateful to AIM USA and the 2 sisters who shared their wisdom and persons with them. In our area of Kenya there is not much opportunity for us to get Benedictine input on the values, Rule etc. other than our own resources.

How is it that you are together in June of 2016?

Sr. Philomena: Sr. Michael Marie was returning to the States after 8 years as prioress in Nairobi and over 10 years in China.

Sr. Michael Marie: Sr. Philomena had invited me at different times to visit her in the USA. Upon my return to the USA, I accepted her invitation. I was happy to share with various parish communities about AIM USA and what it is doing for Benedictine communities all over the world, especially in Africa.

What other involvement have you had with AIM USA?

Sr. Philomena: I have presented mission appeals for AIM USA in parishes for over 15 years and in 2008 through AIM USA's African Women's Commission I went to Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda with S. Sarah Schwartzberg from the Perpetual Adoration sisters in Clyde, MO.

Sr. Michael Marie: Last year AIM sponsored a Benedictine Sister to help in a program in Kenya which had its initial gathering of contemplative and cloistered nuns who requested help for sisters whose formation is challenged because of particular needs. The sisters were filled with gratitude.

What words of hope would you like to share with our newsletter readers?

Sr. Philomena: AIM USA provides an incredible opportunity and vehicle to educate, inform, and introduce an understanding of global connections in faith, in monasticism and the interconnectedness of our hearts as we journey together with all the problems, hurdles, misunderstandings and commonality in faith. AIM USA appeals are more for awareness and understanding than for money. However, the contributions of prayer, \$\$\$ and books are very helpful, too! I personally am eternally grateful for the opportunities afforded me through AIM USA because I learn far more than I am able to give. The mutuality of the Benedictine tradition throughout the world is life-giving. Our African sisters are young and eager. They enrich us all.

Sr. Michael Marie: I pray that many will continue to support the work of AIM USA in reaching Benedictine sisters and brothers who are working in challenging situations around the world. I personally have greatly appreciated what AIM USA did for us in Nairobi and in the countries of East Africa.

Meet a Monastery in North America

Saint Rita Abbey Sonoita, Arizona USA

The Trappist Cistercian community of Our Lady of the Santa Rita Mountains was founded in Sonoita, Arizona on February 6, 1972 by six Sisters from Mt. St. Mary's Abbey, in Wrentham, Massachusetts. Tucson is the closest major city, forty miles to the north; the U.S.-Mexican border is



The Community today.

thirty miles to the south. Our foundresses moved into an old four-room ranch house with six sets of choir books, one blanket apiece, six books for the library, and an abundance of faith, courage and a lively sense of adventure. In 1978 the foundation became a major priory. Our present superior, Mother Victoria Murray, is our fourth titular prioress.

Early industries included stained glass pieces and ceramics. However, neither of these was enough to fully support the growing community over the long term. So soon after becoming a priory, the Sisters began an altar bread bakery. This provides prayerful work that most of the community can participate in, a deep connection to the people of God through the Eucharist, and a steady income.

An eight-bed retreat house, opened in 1995, provides spiritual refreshment to guests from all walks of life, and accommodates individuals or small groups for self-directed retreats. Our unique location

provides a degree of solitude and silence not easily available elsewhere, and it is much appreciated by our guests.

From its foundation, simplicity has been one of the hallmarks of the community. Our monastery's location itself with its vast open landscape invites and nurtures simplicity of mind, heart and action. The Sonoita Valley is a high desert grassland with trees dotting the



The community supports itself by baking altar breads.

hills and surrounded by mountain ranges. Very little of it is developed; it is primarily ranching country with several vineyards. The expanse of sky presides over all in a twenty-four-hour natural liturgy from sunrise to sunrise.

Our foundresses fell in love with it all from the very beginning, and the beauty of this place still captivates those who join us today. Over the years the community has grown from six to eleven Sisters, with our most recent solemn profession in 2013. Our Monastic Experience Weekends provide an opportunity for young women discerning a call to religious life to learn about Cistercian life in general and about how it is lived in our community. We also provide a volunteer program for women who may wish to live and work in a monastic environment for a few months. This can be helpful for deepening their spiritual growth and looking

ahead to their future, and the community is grateful for their presence and service.

It is here in this high desert landscape that we Sisters came to give ourselves to God, and here that we've prayed and worked, loved and suffered, laughed and hoped, and lived the little dramas of the forty-four years since our foundation. We are grateful for all that

has been, and we look forward in hope to all that God will provide for our future.



The monastery with the Santa Rita Mountains behind it.

The Abbey of Our Lady of Exile Mount St. Benedict Tunapuna Trinidad and Tobago West Indies

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is a twin island state, just 7 miles off the coast of Eastern Venezuela. These two islands are the most southerly of the Caribbean Archipelago and feel the constant lapping of the waters of both the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

The Abbey of Our Lady of Exile is snugly nestled in the hills of the lush flora and fauna of Trinidad's northern range six hundred and sixty feet above sea level. After the conquest of the Spaniards by Christopher Columbus in 1498 and the decimation of a large portion of the Indigenous peoples, the repopulation of the islands drew from a wide spectrum: African slaves, East Indian indentured labourers, French land-owners, English aristocrats, Spanish conquistadors, Chinese labourers,



Portuguese, Syrians, Jews, etc. With this potpourri, came an attendant array of customs, rhythms and belief systems, all intermingling with each other and drawing as well from the vestiges of the Indigenes.

Although the British assumed political control in 1797, French was spoken in several quarters and Roman Catholicism held its own. Today English is the lingua franca. Hinduism, Islam, Protestantism, Pentecostalism, the Orisha Faith, the Spiritual Baptists and Roman Catholicism all co-exist, at times with a bit of syncretism, side by side with each other.

Into this microcosm came the monks from the ancient abbey of São Bento in Bahia, Brazil, in the year 1912. They were fleeing religious persecution. On their arrival at Tunapuna, they dedicated the land to the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of "Our Lady of Exile", as the account from the Gospel of Matthew reminded them of their own flight. Under the astute leadership of Dom Mayeul de Caigny and Dom Hugh van der Sanden, the monastery of Mount St Benedict flourished and soon became part of the spiritual landscape of Trinidad and the wider Caribbean. Inspired by the open spirituality of the Rule of St Benedict, the monks opened the ears of their hearts and their monastery to the diverse peoples inhabiting these lands.



Celebrating the Feast of St. Benedict in the Abbey church.

Today a small band of ten monks continue faithfully the work begun by their forefathers one hundred and four years ago. Observing the daily round of prayer and monastic community living as prescribed by St. Benedict, their main task is the Liturgical Ministry to the pilgrims, hundreds of whom visit the monastery on a daily basis seeking prayer and guidance. A "parlour" ministry meets the needs of those who seek a more direct contact with the monks and where often the Sacrament of Reconciliation is sought. There is a retreat ministry which caters for both individuals and groups. Wood work, poultry farming and kitchen gardening are also activities at the abbey. "PAX" Yogurt, a product of the abbey, is sold at the "Pax Abbey Shop" on the grounds of the abbey and in all the major supermarkets on both islands of Trinidad and Tobago. The "Pax Abbey Shop" also offers religious books and items for both devotional and doctrinal use.

The Abbey of Our Lady of Exile, Mount St. Benedict, Trinidad, is the home of the Benedictine monks who live and work in Trinidad and Tobago. It is a place where people of all faiths and of no faith are welcome. It is a place apart where the Way of St. Benedict is lived and offered to all those who visit.



Earthquake Tragedy

On April 16, 2016, a magnitude 7.2 earthquake struck off the coast of Ecuador in Esmeraldas Province, centered in Pedernales. This earthquake resulted in casualties and serious damage to buildings and infrastructures. There are two Benedictine monasteries in this area: Monasterio Trapense in Esmeraldas; and Puerta del Cielo in Vilcabama. Fortunately, neither of these monasteries suffered serious damage or any injuries. However, let us hold in prayer those who lost their lives. They include a novice mistress, Sister Claire Crockett of the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother and five postulants.

Then, on August 25, 2016, the town of Norcia was close to the epicenter of a devastating 6.2 earthquake in Central Italy. The earthquake caused close to 300 deaths as well as several hundred injured.

In Norcia, some of the monks are now living in a large tent outside the walls. Their monastery and the Basilica of St. Benedict and the birthplace of Benedict and Scholastica sustained heavy damage. The Sisters of St. Scholastica sustained damage to their monastery, but are still able to live there.

Let us be mindful of all throughout the world who are suffering from any form of devastation (floods, hurricanes, tornados) or violence.

Like to Travel?

Visit our website: www.aim@aim-usa.org for a virtual journey!

Thanks to Sister Linda Romey, OSB for designing and launching it. Thank you to Sylvia Szpak for being willing to maintain it. We have worked hard at redoing the entire site. Please let us know what you think.

Books, Books, Books

AIM USA had a recent visitor bearing - books! Paul McKrell drove from Pittsburgh, PA - not only to deliver donated books, but to visit AIM USA and see the warehouse. For years, AIM USA donor Pat McGaffigan has helped make it possible for AIM USA to send quality books to monasteries in developing countries. Paul, a book enthusiast himself, has helped "find" books that would be appropriate. Usually he mails them to us; this time he decided to "come and see" what we are about. And for us, it was a delight to meet him, share who we are - and become connected in a deeper way. Thank you, Pat. Thank you, Paul, and thank you everyone who has donated books!



2016 Missionary Cooperative Plan

Generous volunteers, (sisters, brothers, priests) gave of their time and talent to present appeals at parishes across the United States as part of the 2016 Missionary Cooperative Plan. Listed below are the dioceses in which they spoke, the name of the speakers, and where the speakers were from. AIM USA is most grateful to all these speakers.

BEAUMONT

Fr. Peter Funk, OSB; Holy Cross Monastery, Beaumont, TX

CAMDEN

Sr. Philomena Fleck, OSB; St. Walburga Monastery, Elizabeth, NJ

CLEVELAND

Br. Peter Ancell, OSB; St. Andrew Abbey, Cleveland, OH

ERIE

Sr. Therese Glass, OSB; Mount St. Benedict Monastery, Erie, PA
Sr. Theresa Zoky, OSB; Mount St. Benedict Monastery, Erie, PA

KANSAS CITY/ST. JOSEPH

Fr. Benedict Neenan, OSB; Conception Abbey, Conception, MO

MANCHESTER

Fr. John Fortin, OSB; St. Anselm Abbey, Manchester, NH

METUCHEN

Sr. Philomena Fleck, OSB; St. Walburga Monastery, Elizabeth, NJ
Fr. Joel Macul, OSB; St. Paul Monastery, Newton, NJ
Br. Demetrius Thomas, OSB; St. Mary Abbey, Morristown, NJ

SYRACUSE

Sr. Mary Donald Corcoran, OSB; Transfiguration Monastery, Windsor, NY

TULSA

Fr. Joachim Spexarth, OSB; St. Gregory Abbey, Shawnee, OK

Mass Stipends

AIM USA has been sending Mass stipends to Benedictine, Trappist and Cistercian monasteries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America since 1992. These stipends are extremely important to our mission monasteries. No amount is too small. They are sent to both male and female communities. The Masses are offered as soon as the stipends are received.

Monastery to Monastery Program – 2016

There are 57 monasteries and abbeys who have joined the AIM USA Monastery to Monastery Program for 2016. Membership donations are used to fund grants for Benedictine and Cistercian communities in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Christ in the Desert Monastery	Abiquiu	NM
Mount St. Scholastica	Atchison	KS
Marmion Abbey	Aurora	IL
Belmont Abbey	Belmont	NC
St. Benedict's Abbey	Benet Lake	WI
New Camoldoli Hermitage	Big Sur	CA
Monastery of the Glorious Cross	Branford	CT
St. Scholastica Monastery	Boerne	TX
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Carlton	OR
St. Scholastica Monastery	Chicago	IL
St. John's Abbey	Collegeville	MN
Conception Abbey	Conception	MO
Monastery of the Holy Spirit	Conyers	GA
Monastery of St. Gertrude	Cottonwood	ID
St. Walburg Monastery	Covington	KY
Our Lady of the Angels Monastery	Crozet	VA
Sacred Heart Monastery	Cullman	AL
St. Scholastica Monastery	Duluth	MN
Our Lady of the Mississippi	Dubuque	IA
Mount St. Benedict Monastery	Erie	PA
St. Scholastica Monastery	Fort Smith	AR
St. Lucy's Priory	Glendora	CA
St. Emma Monastery	Greensburg	PA
Monastery of the Ascension	Jerome	ID
St. Martin's Abbey	Lacey	WA
St. Vincent Archabbey	Latrobe	PA
Emmanuel Monastery	Lutherville	MD
St. Anselm Abbey	Manchester	NH
Holy Wisdom Monastery	Middleton	WI
Mepkin Abbey	Moncks Corner	SC
St. Peter's Abbey	Muenster	SK
St. Paul's Abbey	Newton	NJ
St. Bede Abbey	Peru	IL
New Melleray Abbey	Peosta	IA
Abbey of the Genesee	Piffard	NY
Mount Saviour Monastery	Pine City	NY
St. Martin Monastery	Rapid City	SD
Sacred Heart Monastery	Richardton	ND
Assumption Abbey	Richardton	ND
St. Mary Monastery	Rock Island	IL
Christ the King Priory	Schuyler	NB
Santa Rita Abbey	Sonoita	AZ
Benedictine Monastery	Sonoita	AZ
St. Joseph's Abbey	Spencer	MA
St. Joseph Abbey	St. Benedict	LA
St. Benedict's Monastery	St. Joseph	MN

Holy Name Monastery	St. Leo	FL
St. Louis Abbey	St. Louis	MO
St. Paul's Monastery	St. Paul	MN
New Subiaco Abbey	Subiaco	AR
Abbey of Gethsemani	Trappist	KY
Our Lady of New Clairvaux Abbey	Vina	CA
Queen of Heaven Monastery	Warren	OH
Mother of God Monastery	Watertown	SD
Weston Priory	Weston	VT
Redwoods Monastery	Whitethorn	CA
Transfiguration Monastery	Windsor	NY
Mt St Mary's Abbey	Wrentham	MA



The following grants requested by developing monasteries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America were awarded by AIM USA in June of this year:

Grants June 2016

Africa

- Benedictine Monastery, Klubri, BURKINA FASO: ongoing formation of monks
- MADAGASCAR: initial formation of Cistercian monks and nuns
- St. Justina's Monastery, Abakaliki, NIGERIA: study for a Trappist sister
- Our Lady of Praise Monastery, UGANDA: for purchase of a photocopier

Asia

- Benedictine Monastery, Navajeevan, INDIA: repair roof of a school building
- Shanti Nilayam Abbey, Kothanur, INDIA: for purchase of a tractor
- Benedictine Monastery of the Epiphany, VIETNAM: scholarship for a Benedictine sister to study

Latin America

- Mosteiro Nossa Senhora de Novo Mundo, BRAZIL: Cistercian brother to study in Rome
- Guadalupanas Benedictinas, Coban, GUATEMALA: ecology project to promote safety of food and better nutrition

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

*May our greetings declare, "I honor the Christ in you."
May our gifts be mercy and compassion.*

May we birth hope into our world wrapped in beauty, peace, and love.

Christmas Blessings,

Theresa Zoky, OSB

Sister Theresa Zoky, O.S.B.
Executive Director, AIM USA
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