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The United States Secretariat of the Alliance for International Monasticism

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# Notes Worth Quoting

To our Friends at AIM USA,

The box of books has arrived! They are absolutely wonderful! We GREATLY APPRECIATE this tremendous gift, as the purchase of such great books would be almost impossible from Uganda. We wish to let all the communities who donated books and funds for this project that it is entirely worth the effort. Since we will be beginning our formation program here, such resources are essential. May God bless you all abundantly. We pray especially for vocations to your communities.

With grateful prayers, Sr. Rosann Ocken, OSB  
St. Benedict Monastery, Jinja, Uganda



Dear Sister,  
We, the Benedictine Nuns of Nativity monastery Umuahia diocese are writing to express our profound gratitude to you for the carton of

books you sent to us. The books are quite educative and spiritually enriching.

Once more, thanks for your generosity, and may the Good Lord continue to shower His blessings on you. While I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Sr. Maria Ozioma Offor, OSB  
Benedictine Nativity Monastery, Nigeria

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, Peru

Dear Sister,

Good news! Today, this afternoon, we finally have got the books! WONDERFUL! This series of Ancient Christian writers is awesome! May God bless and reward AIM and all the donors!

Best regards, S. Agniete Ivaskėvičiūtė, OSB  
Benedictine Sisters of Kaunas, Lithuania

## Front Cover Icon

MADONNA OF KERALA  
by Brother Aruldas Pulickaparambil  
KURISUMALA ASHRAM, VAGAMON, INDIA

Dear Sister,

We write to express our immense gratitude to AIM USA for the books we just received from your office. Indeed, we are sincerely grateful to AIM for this great favour and we pray the good Lord to continue to bless all the efforts you make to contribute to the healthy growth of monasteries especially in the young Church.



Thank you so much and God bless you,  
M. Margaret Mary Ngobidi OSB  
St. Scholastica Benedictine Abbey, Nigeria

Dear Sister,

January 5th we received the box of books from you. Thank you very much. The community very much appreciates the books.

Sr. Caterina Mazzarelli, OCSO  
Trappistine Monastery, Macau S.A.R.

Dear Sister,

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.

Your message was delivered to us through post office on 20th January 2017 and we must confess that your donation of the following books, thirty-four in number, was received with gratitude and they are very useful especially *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 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. Once more thanks for everything. 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.

Yours in the Lord,  
Sr. Eberechukwu Emeagwara, OSB  
Benedictine Presentation Monastery, Nigeria



## Final Address to the Congress of Abbots Dom Gregory Polan, new Abbot Primate

It is my conviction that monasteries are among the most important places in our world today. Why? Because there are so many people whose lives are significantly touched by brokenness, sadness, disappointment, failure, struggle, loss, and woundedness. What we offer is a warm welcome, whoever you are and whatever your story in life tells; we say, ‘come and be with us and find healing in the word of God that we offer you.’ The Psalms that we pray every day tell of people who lament the sadness of loss in their lives, the pain of failure in broken relationships, and the fear of enemies.

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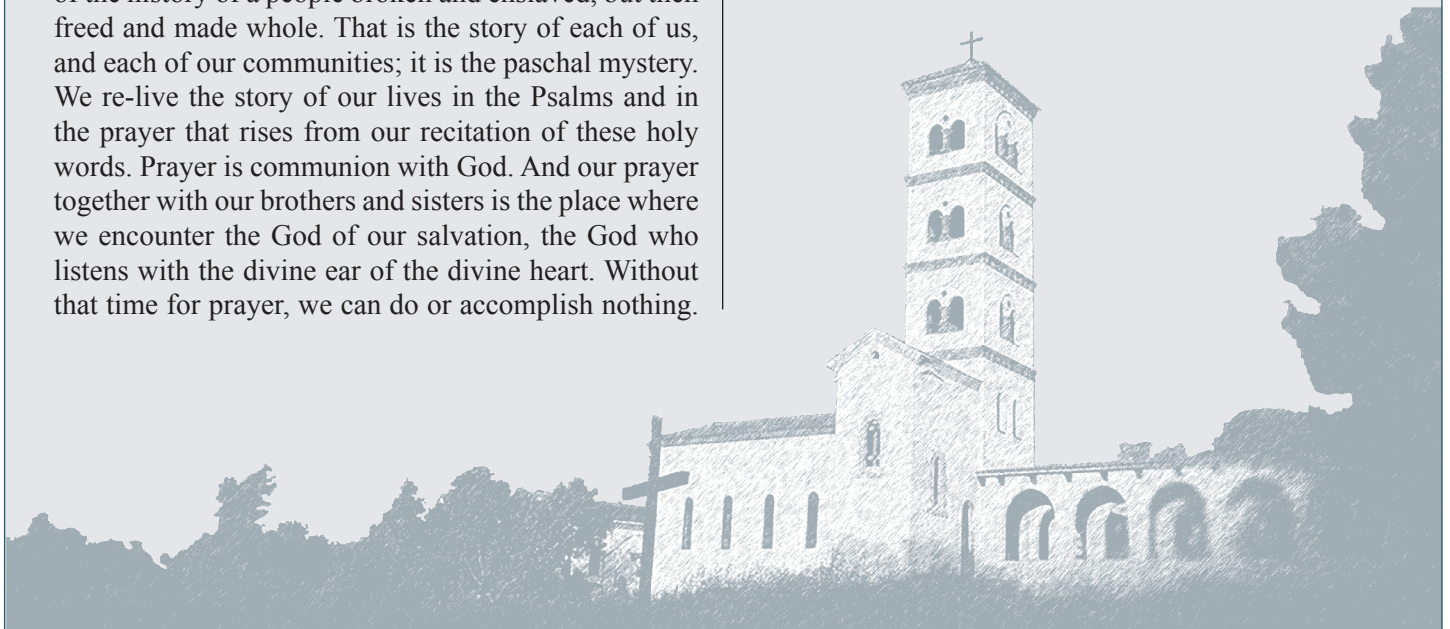
***“...monasteries are among  
the most important places  
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For those who suffer, these words of the Psalmist tell of their life experience; and in these words, they come to see that they are not alone – and most importantly, God is with them. The Psalms also tell us of the joy and gladness that comes in knowing the Lord. How often do we hear in the Psalms, ‘Sing a new song to the Lord.’ Each day provides for us a new experience of God’s providential care and love. When we can tell the mystery of God’s working in our lives, we ‘sing a new song to the Lord,’ and our faith inspires hope in others. The Psalms also tell of the history of a people broken and enslaved, but then freed and made whole. That is the story of each of us, and each of our communities; it is the paschal mystery. We re-live the story of our lives in the Psalms and in the prayer that rises from our recitation of these holy words. Prayer is communion with God. And our prayer together with our brothers and sisters is the place where we encounter the God of our salvation, the God who listens with the divine ear of the divine heart. Without that time for prayer, we can do or accomplish nothing.

Our prayer must be our strength and our place of refuge. By our presence there, attentive and open to what God has to say to us, we show our brothers and sisters what is essential: As St. Benedict reminds us, ‘Nothing is to be preferred to the work of God.’ And yes, the Psalms also tell us the story of Jesus; the Psalms give us the nourishment which fostered the growth of Jesus as a young boy into an adult man, who found nourishment for his spirit, and also became a ‘living Psalm’ – giving voice to lament in his life, praise to the God of all creation, and opening his heart to the One he called *Abba*.

Something that I have said often in preaching retreats is this: Listening is the heartbeat of the monastic life. It is the first command of St. Benedict, with a distinctive way of listening – with the ear of the heart. Words don’t just come into our ears; but words come into our eyes and then flow down to our hearts. In the Bible, the ‘heart’ is something more than the root of our emotions. The heart is the place where our human will, our mind, our deepest convictions, and our passions come together. When we are able to listen with the ear of our heart, we listen to others as Jesus listened to them – with all that he possessed within him. His *Abba* has formed his heart in those times of silence and prayer to react to life in a way that showed us the meaning of the new humanity he was living through the new law of love, mercy and compassion. So let us listen with the ear of our heart, and believe that when we do, God forms, transforms, and conforms our hearts into the image of his Son, Jesus.





### Mount Michael Benedictine Abbey

Mount Michael Benedictine Abbey is a foundation of Conception Abbey. In the 1950s Conception Abbey and Seminary, located in Missouri, were growing exponentially. The Seminary boasted 12 years of education—high school, college and theology. It was an ambitious undertaking. Because it was growing so fast, there was a need to move the high school part of the seminary to another location. After much searching, the monks found Rex Olson's farm in Elkhorn, Nebraska, endearingly named Journey's End.

Unlike most monastic foundations, Mount Michael did not build an abbey building at its inception. She threw herself into her primary apostolate—educating and forming young men for the priesthood. It flourished from day one. The dorms were full, and the monks had to live on the top floor of the school until the abbey was built. When the first abbey building was realized, it was a temporary building located a distance away from the school and the chapel. To this day, though the temporary abbey has been replaced, the monks walk to the chapel in the school for prayers, mass and work. Making this walk requires some endurance, especially in Nebraska snow blizzards.

In the 1960s, it was no longer in vogue to attend a minor seminary – high school. Enrollment dropped considerably. The monks didn't miss a beat and decided to keep the main apostolate as a high school for young men. The school was always dedicated to high caliber academics. The monks changed the name of St. John's Seminary to Mount Michael

Benedictine High School, a college preparatory school. It was a success from day one. It now opens its doors to local and international students. It has three components now – 7-day



boarders, 5-day boarders and day students. The monks have been and continue to be vital to the school. A number of alumni of both St. John's Seminary and Mount Michael Benedictine School have continued into the priesthood, including Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago and Creighton University president Fr. Daniel Hendrickson.

Although the main apostolate of Mount Michael Abbey is its school, there are other apostolates as well. For many years Mount Michael provided priests to help in the Archdiocese of Omaha and other dioceses as well. Another apostolate is hospitality. Although Mount Michael does not have a retreat house, it does have a restaurant. The monks preserved Rex Olson's house and it is now St. Benedict's Guest House. They have faithfully cared for this house and provided hospitality with food and drink in an atmosphere that is almost story-book like. When one walks into this house at Christmas time, it feels, smells and looks like something from a Christmas carol.

Mount Michael tries to emphasize five Benedictine values—Community, Hospitality, Integrity, Moderation and Service. These are etched in stone in five large arches leading into the new school building. The Benedictine cross has been laid in concrete, tying the chapel and Benedictine spirituality to the school. Mount Michael strives to instill these values in all who visit.



## Misioneras Guadalupanas de Cristo Rey

We, the Misioneras Guadalupanas de Cristo Rey, OSB, are a Mexican Religious Congregation founded in 1930 in Mexico City. Our founder was Rev. Mother Josefina María Valencia y Rodríguez, together with our co-founder Rev. Madre María Plácida Barrios de Los Ríos, who decided to establish this foundation right at the feet of Our Mother Santa María de Guadalupe, and that is the reason for us to have the great privilege of being very close to this Guadalupe Sanctuary.



We are confederated with the Benedictine Order, and our status is of Pontifical Right. Currently, we are 150 sisters, from which 70% are older than 70 years. We are present in four countries: two communities in the United States of America; one community in Guatemala; one community in Nicaragua, and fifteen communities in México.

Our Motherhouse is located in Mexico City. Its main mission is for members to live in community as well as follow the liturgical life, to care for our older and sick sisters, and to receive guests and pilgrims by trying to live the invitation of Saint Benedict "Receive them as Christ himself..." (BR.53).

We give special devotion to the formation, attention and care of children. We help develop fundamental values in them that provide the basis for better human and Christian relations.

Our original schools are mainly devoted to boys and girls with low economic resources.

We are present in rural, peasant, and indigenous zones, and in communion with the parishes we offer services according to the needs of the Parish Community.

These services are on Christian formation; through health services with alternative medicine; working with the families by fostering healthy homes amidst much disintegration due to poverty, violence, and insecurity which also causes people to migrate to other places. As a Congregation, we look forward to creating ecological consciousness, and to caring for our Common House, as Pope Francis has invited us to do; in some of our communities we are working on growing organic orchards.

Our Motherhouse is open to all persons who request a space such as the chapel, especially our neighbors who come to celebrate their faith in Eucharist. This motherhouse is also a meeting place for education and training of our sisters and lay brothers and lay sisters who collaborate with us in our pastoral ministries.

God walks by our side showing us His loving face in the happiness of the families, in the children, in the guests, and in the pilgrims who visit us. We give thanks to God and bless Him, because we feel His love through all these people.

We give thanks to AIM USA that invites us to share part of our life in this means of communication with other Benedictine monasteries.





## Oblates Listen with the Ear of their Heart

The oblate community of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, Indiana was less than ten years old when they began talking about their desire to be of service as an oblate community beyond what they were already doing for the monastic community and its corporate ministries. In 1998, I received information about the Monastery to Monastery program that A.I.M. was sponsoring and took the information to our oblates. They were excited about the possibility of making the Lenten collection that A.I.M. sponsored to assist monasteries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America an annual event that they would support. However, they did not want to simply collect funds. They expressed a sincere desire to get to know a community that they could relate to through e-mail, and perhaps actually exchange a visit with in the future.

We began by writing to the A.I.M. office in Erie, explaining our interest and asking for a list of monasteries that has oblates and at least one member who could understand English. We received a list of four communities with contact information. Four oblates chose a community to write to, explaining our desire for a relationship and asking that if they were interested in relating with us, would they please send us information about themselves. After some time, we heard back from two communities. The next task was to decide which community to choose. After much discussion, we decided to choose both because one was a foundation of the other.

That was the beginning of our ongoing relationship with

Abadia Gaudium Maria in Cordoba and Monasterio Nuestra Senora Del Parana in Entre Rios, both in Argentina. Since 1999 we have exchanged newsletters, pictures and other correspondence with these two communities. In addition, we pray for each other and special needs or intentions that are shared; and we have shared our Lenten collection with them through A.I.M. who is able to make sure the monies are transferred safely.

We have learned much about the struggles and joys of these communities and it helps us to see beyond our own little space in the world. We deeply appreciate knowing that the prayer life we share is a way we support each other in living out our commitment to Benedict's way of life.

Antoinette Purcell, OSB, Director of Oblates  
Our Lady of Grace Monastery  
Beech Grove, Indiana, U.S.A.



## Monastery to Monastery Program-2017

Below are listed the monasteries and abbeys who have joined the AIM USA Monastery to Monastery Program for 2017. Donations from these monasteries are used to fund grants for Benedictine and Cistercian communities in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Monastery	City	State
Christ in the Desert Monastery	Abiquiu	NM
Mount St. Scholastica	Atchison	KS
Marmion Abbey	Aurora	IL
Assumption Abbey	Ava	MO
Our Lady of Grace Monastery & Oblates	Beech Grove	IN
Holy Cross Monastery	Beaumont	TX
Belmont Abbey	Belmont	NC
New Camoldoli Hermitage	Big Sur	CA
Annunciation Monastery	Bismarck	ND
St. Benedict Monastery & Oblates	Bristow	VA
St. Scholastica Monastery	Boerne	TX
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Carlton	OR
St. Andrew Abbey	Cleveland	OH
Benet Hill Monastery	Colorado Springs	CO
Conception Abbey	Conception	MO
Monastery of St. Gertrude	Cottonwood	ID
Mount St. Benedict Monastery	Crookston	MN
Our Lady of the Angels Monastery	Crozet	VA
Sacred Heart Monastery	Cullman	AL
St. Scholastica Monastery	Duluth	MN
Mount St. Benedict Monastery	Erie	PA
St. Lucy's Priory	Glendora	CA
Our Lady of Dallas	Irving	TX

Monastery	City	State
St. Martin's Abbey	Lacey	WA
St. Vincent Archabbey	Latrobe	PA
Sacred Heart Monastery	Lisle	IL
Emmanuel Monastery	Lutherville	MD
St. Anselm Abbey	Manchester	NH
Dwelling Place Monastery	Martin	KY
Holy Wisdom Monastery	Middleton	WI
Mepkin Abbey	Moncks Corner	SC
St. Peter's Abbey	Muenster	SK
St. Bede Abbey	Peru	IL
New Melleray Abbey	Peosta	IA
Mount Saviour Monastery	Pine City	NY
Abbey of St. Gregory	Portsmouth	RI
Woodside Priory	Portola Valley	CA
St. Martin Monastery	Rapid City	SD
Sacred Heart Monastery	Richardton	ND
Assumption Abbey	Richardton	ND
Mary Mother of the Church	Richmond	VA
St. Mary Monastery	Rock Island	IL
Christ the King Priory	Schuyler	NE
Benedictine Monastery	Sonoita	AZ
St. Joseph's Abbey	Spencer	MA
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
St. Anselm's Abbey	Washington	DC
Queen of Heaven Monastery	Warren	OH
Weston Priory	Weston	VT
Redwoods Monastery	Whitethorn	CA
Mt St Mary's Abbey	Wrentham	MA
Sacred Heart Monastery	Yankton	SD

## Spring Grants 2017

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

### AFRICA

**Nigeria**-for scholarships for two Trappistine sisters to study theology and pastoral communication

**Eritrea**-for scholarships for four monks to study philosophy and theology

**Cameroon**-for funding to reconstruct part of a building after a devastating fire

### ASIA

**Philippines**-for travel expenses for a Sister to take part in the Monastic Formation Program in Rome

**India**-for an irrigation system for the cardamom plantation that is a source of income for the monastery

**India**-for a monk to take a course in Rome on the Rule of Benedict

### SOUTH AMERICA

**Brazil**-for the replacement of the monastery roofing severely damaged by a violent storm that caused flooding in the monastery

### OTHER

**Mexico**-for funding for a car for Sisters in a mountainous region with little access to public transport

**Rome**-to make possible the Cistercian formation course

*Your monetary gift to AIM USA will give hope to  
Benedictine and Cistercian Monasteries around the world.  
Be a part of the gift giving—donate on line at [www.aim.org](http://www.aim.org).  
Thank you for your care and concern.*

## A Visiting Monastic

Abbot Paul Stonham, OSB, of Belmont Abbey, England, recently spent 6 days with the community at Mount St Benedict, Erie. Paul has been abbot since 2000 and was reelected for a third term in November 2016. Previously, he had been a founder member of Belmont's foundation in Peru, the Monastery of the Incarnation, now at Pachacamac, an hour or so south of Lima. He spent 20 years in Peru. As a member of the AIM International Team for many years, Paul has had a responsible relationship with monasteries in Latin America and the Caribbean. While visiting Sister Marlene Bertke, former AIM USA staff member, it was great for the present staff to share news with him, also.



## 2017 Missionary Cooperative Plan

Generous volunteers gave of their time and talent to present appeals at parishes across the United States. Listed below are the diocese in which they spoke, the names of the speakers with their monastery. AIM USA is most grateful to these volunteers and for the generous donations received from the parishes in which they spoke.

### ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN

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

### CAMDEN

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

### CLEVELAND

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

### ERIE

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

### MANCHESTER

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

### PATERSON

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

### ST. PAUL/MINNEAPOLIS

Sr. Mary White, OSB; St. Paul Monastery, St. Paul, MN

### 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.

## 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. Tell us what you think.

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

Dear Friends,

In Abbot Primate Gregory's article on page 3, he says that *"monasteries are among the most important places in our world today."*

Have you ever visited a monastery? Do you know the location of the monastery closest to where you live? If not, I challenge you to find out the name of the nearest monastery to where you live and schedule a visit. There may even be a male and female monastery in close proximity to each other. Visit both.

You may ask, "But, why would I do that? Why would I want to do that? What role do monastic communities play in our worldwide church, in our communities?"

Monastic Communities are organized as small, local and autonomous groups of female and male monks who become stable members of a region. Monasteries are native to an area and bound to it. The gift of a well-ordered Christian life is their witness.

The praying of the psalms as part of the Divine Office that Abbot Primate Gregory talks about is central to the prayer life of the monastery. It is through this prayer that community members gain the strength and insight to see and respond to the needs of others.

What happens in the area surrounding the monasteries affects everyone as much as it does the members of the monastery.

Monasteries have a great deal to do with what happens in an area in regard to the education system, the social service system, the intellectual environment, and the spiritual life of the area where it is located.

So, again, why are monasteries "among the most important places in our world today?" Visit the one nearest you and find out! Discover what programs "your" monastery has to offer; find out how you can learn and participate in its outreach ministries; consider how you can join in its prayer life. Or visit a monastery on line. See how you can join others in bringing peace to our world by "listening with the ear of your heart."

During this blessed Christmas season:

***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.***

***May Christ be born in our hearts, our world, our universe.***

Christmas blessings to all,

*Theresa Zoky, OSB*

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