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OVER 2000 YEARS AGO



MARY, JOSEPH AND THE CHILD FLED...

Notes Worth Quoting

...from Indonesia

Dear AIM,

We have a small library: 1,696 English books. We need more books for Lectio Divina, study, etc.

It is difficult to buy books from abroad and expensive too. So, we are very grateful to be helped by your gift of books. The books we received from you are really precious and will make our library rich. Reading is a source of inspiration. Thank you.

Mikael Santana, Prior
Pertapaan Trappist Lamanabi

...from Nigeria

Dear Sister,

We, the nuns of St. Justina Cistercian Monastery, Abakaliki, want to express our profound gratitude to you for the subsequent cartons of books you sent to us. We really appreciate those books. They are very educative and spiritually enriching. With sincere appreciation and thanks from the depth of our hearts; we remain ever grateful for your generosity and kindness and may the good Lord continue to shower His blessing on you for your good works.

Sister Mary Joe (Librarian)
St. Justina Cistercian Monastery

Dear Sister,

We write to express our profound gratitude for the books we received from you. Indeed, we are always very glad to receive your packages of books for they are very useful to us as they help us not only to broaden our knowledge but also to deepen our spirituality. We are indeed very grateful and thank you so much.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
M. Margaret Mary Ngobidi, OSB
Queen of Peace Monastery

...from Namibia

Dear Sister,

Thank you for your email. It is such a pleasant surprise. Yes, we have been getting books from AIM USA-two shipments, in fact, one for our community in Ruacana and one in our Priory House. To say that the book donation is appreciated is an understatement. They are very much needed in a place like ours that has no publishing companies. Our spiritual reading books here come from outside the country and are very expensive. On behalf of the Sisters, thank you, it is a timely gift as we are building up our library.

Wishing you God's richest blessings,
Sister Mary Thomas, OSB
Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing

...from Cameroon

Dear Sister,

I am sending this mail to acknowledge receipt of the package of books on Biblical Studies sent to us by the AIM USA. On behalf of the community of Our Lady of Bamenda, Cistercian Abbey of Cameroon, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude to AIM and donors, as we pray that the Good Lord may continue to bless this organization abundantly to continue to assist needy communities like ours. We gratefully look forward with open hearts to many more packages of this type, please God.

Br. Polycarp, for the Community

...from Taiwan

Dear Sister and All at AIM USA,

I am writing to let you know that the wonderful box of English books from you at AIM has arrived safely here in Taiwan, and all in good order. We appreciate so much this expression of Brotherly/Sisterly charity and affection on your part. There are some real treasures in this box, and we especially welcome the books by/about Thomas Merton, to add to our small Merton collection. So, you are helping us to fill a real need. Our joyful gratitude to you!

Again, many thanks, and kindly keep us here at Shuili in your prayers, as we do you.

Br. M. Theophane Young, OCSO
Holy Mother of God Monastery

...from Philippines

Dear Sister and AIM USA Staff,

We acknowledge with sincerest gratitude the valuable spiritual books you had generously sent to us. They are very useful instruments for our on-going monastic formation. Again, our deep gratitude and

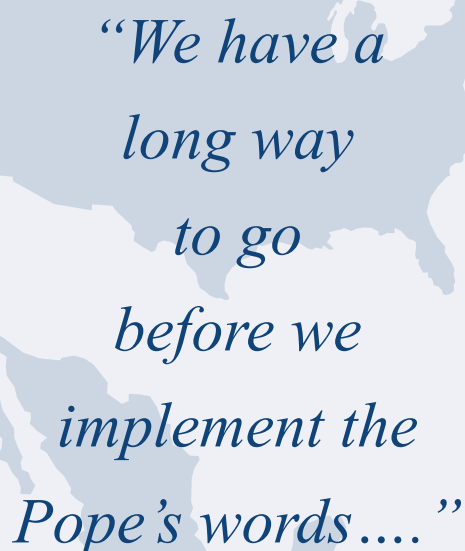
appreciation coupled with our constant prayers for you and the good benefactors. Devotedly yours in the Holy Eucharist,

M. Mary Geraldine Villasenor, OSB
Benedictine Sisters Reparatrices of the Sacred Heart



Sister Susan Mika, OSB, a Benedictine Sister of Boerne, TX, writes about the refugee situation from the perspective of her ministry on the Mexican-USA border. Sister Susan shares with us how one community is responding to this on-going worldwide crisis.

Families Belong Together



*“We have a
long way
to go
before we
implement the
Pope’s words....”*

In the Rule of Benedict, all are to be welcomed as Christ. When we hear this passage, what comes to mind? When Pope John Paul II came to visit San Antonio in 1987, he shared, *In Jesus Christ the world has truly known the mystery of forgiveness, mercy and reconciliation, which is proclaimed by God’s word this day. At the same time, God’s inexhaustible mercy to us obliges us to be reconciled among ourselves. This makes practical demands on the Church in Texas and the Southwest of the United States. It means bringing hope and love wherever there is division and alienation.*

Your history registers a meeting of cultures, indigenous and immigrant, sometimes marked by tensions and conflicts, yet constantly moving towards reconciliation and harmony. People of different races and languages, colours and customs, have come to this land to make it their home... This land is a crossroads, standing at the border of two great nations, and experiencing both the enrichment and the complications which arise from this circumstance. You are thus a symbol and a kind of laboratory testing America’s commitment to her founding moral principles and human values.

Against this background one may speak of a current phenomenon here and elsewhere – the movement of people northwards, not only from Mexico but from other southern neighbours of the United States... Among you there are people of great courage and generosity “who have been doing much on behalf of suffering brothers and sisters arriving from the south. They have sought to show compassion in the face of complex human, social and political realities.

His words were true then and are even more true now. In the summer of 2014, we became aware of the plight of unaccompanied minor children when the TV cameras captured pictures of 1,000 youth on the floor at a military facility in San Antonio. This horror caused churches, religious orders, non-profit service organizations to come together to form The Interfaith Welcome Coalition (IWC). The group has many volunteers and serves those waiting at the bus station and airport as they leave the Family Detention Centers (Karnes, Dilley and Pearsall) in south Texas with little to no necessities. Backpacks with supplies for the next part of the journey are given to families. This simple act of kindness and mercy is lovingly received. Several member groups of the coalition work on the legal aspect of credible fear interviews, asylum applications and all things for court appearances. Our Benedictine contribution has been to document what is happening with federal court cases and to compile/disseminate articles to confirm what has occurred. When it was possible to visit those detained, two of our Sisters were trained and certified to go into the Detention Centers. Those days are long gone.

With the forced separation of children from their families this summer, the world has watched in horror that we would enforce such a policy. We have a long way to go before we implement the Pope’s words from 1987.

Statistics as of September 14, 2018 (from New York Times articles)

400 children still separated from family due to forced separation policy – in government custody

12,800 unaccompanied minor children who crossed the U.S. Mexico border — in government custody

Weston Priory, Weston, Vermont

The Benedictine monastic community of Weston Priory in Weston, Vermont, was founded in 1953 by Abbot Leo A. Rudloff, OSB, of the Abbey of the Dormition in Jerusalem, Israel. From its beginning Abbot Leo challenged the community *to stay open to the Holy Spirit, to be aware of the signs of the times, and to strive for growth in Gospel and monastic values shaped by a contemporary consciousness*. Two founding values at Weston represented a *return to a more ancient and foundational vision of the monastic life*: the monks' work was to be *within* the monastery; and, whether ordained or non-ordained, they would relate to one another on the basis of *equality*.

“The brothers hope to join their lives...becoming a living parable of the Gospel in a hungry, violent world.”

In gospel hospitality the brothers welcome all who come to the monastery for prayer and renewal. They care for the land and its gift of creation through the work of forestry management, gardening, sugaring, apple orchards, the care of animals and bee-keeping. Creatively they express their joy



Priory Chapel and adjoining monastery building

and peace in woodworking, musical composition, weaving, ceramics, candle-making, photography, calligraphy and the graphic arts.

Their non-violent Gospel witness for justice seeks to experience first-hand the real-life situations of those who daily face inequality and injustice and to allow that experience to evangelically challenge them. This process of listening



Monastic Community of Weston Priory

and responding especially to the poor has led the brothers into Appalachia's coal country, indigenous North American communities, remote mountain villages of Mexico, war-ravaged Nicaragua, to our own nation's inner-cities and to offer sanctuary to Guatemalan refugees. Together with a congregation of Benedictine Sisters in Mexico (*Misioneras Guadalupanas de Cristo Rey*), the brothers co-sponsor a small Hospitality/Retreat Center, *Centro Guadalupe*, in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in order to share first-hand experiences of Latin America with persons from North America.

The brothers hope to witness the vision of Benedict to create a movement of baptized Christians who join their lives to one another thereby becoming a living parable of the Gospel in a hungry, violent world. In a spirit of joy and simplicity, freedom and generous service to others, they wish to celebrate their unity with one another, with all persons and communities, and with all creation.



Weston Brothers and Mexican Sisters at the Guadalupe Center, Cuernavaca, México

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

Benedictine Sisters of St. Lioba, Ashirbhavan Priory, Bhopal, India

The saga of journey, the journey of the Benedictine Sisters of St. Lioba is traced back to 21 March 1927 in Freiburg, Germany, by Mother Maria Benedicta Forenbach, a young nurse whom God commissioned as mediator for a specific mission to rehabilitate the wounded after World War I, while compiling the monastic ideals of St. Benedict.



Medical camps for ladies and children in the villages

Mother Foundress, a great visionary true to her testament, ***“interiorly a monk and exteriorly an apostle,”*** envisaged the territorial expansion of her vision, extended far and wide as far as India. Beginning in 1962, for three consecutive years, 13 zealous Indian girls from Kerala sailed to Germany. They returned to their motherland in 1971 after their religious training, profession and secular studies, in order to branch out in India. God led these zealous missionaries to extend the Kingdom in different parts of India...establishing 17 communities in various parts of the country, catering to the needs of the church through pastoral activities, youth ministries, catechism, family visits, etc....

We, the Benedictine Sisters of St. Lioba, carrying the legacy of our foundress, go out of our way to lift up the downtrodden through our NGOs i.e. ‘Prerana Service Society’ and ‘Sneha Service Society’, wherein we have hostels for college students and boarding for tribal girls, village outreach programs, care of the abandoned



Benedictine Sisters of St. Lioba, Ashirbhavan Priory

“We, the Benedictine Sisters of St. Lioba, carrying the legacy of our foundress, go out of our way to lift up the downtrodden....”

in the hospice, and vocational training centers, etc.... The congregation at present is on the go in continuing the healing ministry of Jesus through a 50 bed, fully equipped hospital and a few dispensaries in village stations. We extend our service



Distributing medicines to the poor girls

to nation building, in molding the future citizens, imparting knowledge to the young minds through five formal and a few non-formal schools.

Great edifices are built on unshaken corner stones..., Jesus Christ the corner stone and St. Lioba our heavenly mediator, leads us on magnificently in blending our monastic lives in tune with the motto of St. Benedict ***“ORA ET LABORA”***. Thus, the vision of our foundress about Ashir Bhavan priory in India lives on to this day.

2018 Monastery To Monastery Members

Christ in the Desert Monastery	Abiquiu	NM	Dwelling Place Monastery	Martin	KY
Mount St. Scholastica	Atchison	KS	Holy Wisdom Monastery	Middleton	WI
Marmion Abbey	Aurora	IL	Mepkin Abbey	Moncks Corner	SC
Assumption Abbey	Ava	MO	Queen of Angels Monastery	Mount Angel	OR
Holy Cross Monastery	Beaumont	TX	St. Peter's Abbey	Muenster	SK
Our Lady of Grace Monastery	Beech Grove	IN	House of Bread	Nanaimo	BC
Belmont Abbey	Belmont	NC	St. Paul's Abbey	Newton	NJ
St. Benedict's Abbey	Benet Lake	WI	New Melleray Abbey	Peosta	IA
Holy Cross Abbey	Berryville	VA	St. Bede Abbey	Peru	IL
New Camoldoli Hermitage	Big Sur	CA	Abbey of the Genesee	Piffard	NY
Annunciation Monastery	Bismark	ND	Mount Saviour Monastery	Pine City	NY
Monastery of the Glorious Cross	Branford	CT	Woodside Priory	Portola Valley	CA
St. Benedict Monastery	Bristow	VA	Abbey of St. Gregory	Portsmouth	RI
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Carlton	OR	Valley of Our Lady	Prairie du Sac	WI
St. Scholastica Monastery	Chicago	IL	St. Martin Monastery	Rapid City	SD
Perpetual Adoration Congregation	Clyde	MO	Assumption Abbey	Richardton	ND
St. John's Abbey	Collegeville	MN	Sacred Heart Monastery	Richardton	ND
Benet Hill Monastery	Colorado Springs	CO	St. Gertrude Monastery	Ridgely	MD
Conception Abbey	Conception	MO	St. Mary Monastery	Rock Island	IL
Monastery of St. Gertrude	Cottonwood	ID	Christ the King Priory	Schuyler	NE
St. Walburg Monastery	Covington	KY	St. Benedict Monastery	Snowmass	CO
Mount St. Benedict	Crookston	MN	Benedictine Monastery	Sonoita	AZ
Our Lady of the Angels Monastery	Crozet	VA	Santa Rita Abbey	Sonoita	AZ
Sacred Heart Monastery	Cullman	AL	St. Joseph's Abbey	Spencer	MA
Our Lady of the Mississippi	Dubuque	IA	St. Joseph Abbey	St. Benedict	LA
St. Scholastica Monastery	Duluth	MN	St. Benedict's Monastery	St. Joseph	MN
St. Walburga Monastery	Elizabeth	NJ	Holy Name Monastery	St. Leo	FL
Mt. Michael Abbey	Elkhorn	NB	St. Louis Abbey	St. Louis	MO
Mount St. Benedict Monastery	Erie	PA	St. Paul's Monastery	St. Paul	MN
Monastery Immaculate Conception	Ferdinand	IN	New Subiaco Abbey	Subiaco	AR
St. Scholastica Monastery	Fort Smith	AR	Abbey of Gethsemani	Trappist	KY
St. Lucy's Priory	Glendora	CA	St. Joseph's Monastery	Tulsa	OK
St. Emma Monastery	Greensburg	PA	Our Lady of New Clairvaux Abbey	Vina	CA
Glastonbury Abbey	Hingham	MA	Queen of Heaven Monastery	Warren	OH
Our Lady of Dallas	Irving	TX	St. Anselm Abbey	Washington	DC
Monastery of the Ascension	Jerome	ID	Mother of God Monastery	Watertown	SD
St. Martin's Abbey	Lacey	WA	Weston Priory	Weston	VT
St. Vincent Archabbey	Latrobe	PA	Redwoods Monastery	Whitethorn	CA
Sacred Heart Monastery	Lisle	IL	Transfiguration Monastery	Windsor	NY
Emmanuel Monastery	Lutherville	MD	St. Benedict's Monastery	Winnipeg	MB
St. Anselm Abbey	Manchester	NH	Mt. St. Mary's Abbey	Wrentham	MA

Good News From St. Joseph's Benedictine Monastery, Kerala, India

We congratulate St. Joseph's Monastery Makkiyad. Their monastery's Philosophy Institute of 50 years is now affiliated with Sant' Anselmo in Rome. This philosophy institute meets the needs of their monks, monks from three other priories, and candidates for the priesthood – both from religious congregations and dioceses. This cooperation is an excellent opportunity to assure quality education of monks with much lower cost than living in Rome. Best wishes!

Mass Offerings

AIM USA accepts and sends Mass stipends to Benedictine, Trappist and Cistercian monasteries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. These offerings are extremely important to our mission monasteries. Those who give Mass Offerings are contributing to the good of the Church by sharing in the support of its ministers.

Visit The AIM USA Web Page

Please visit the AIM USA web page at www.aim-usa.org for more information on how you can become a supporter of Benedictine life around the world.

Annual Board Meeting

The AIM USA Board of Trustees held its annual meeting on October 3, 2018 at Mount Saint Benedict, Erie, PA.



Seated: Abbot Stanislaus Gumula, OCSO, (Moncks Corner, SC), Sister Michael Marie Rottinghaus, OSB, (Norfolk, NE), Father Joel Macul, OSB, (Schuyler, NE), Sister Mary White, OSB, (St. Paul, MN), Brother Paul Richards, OSB, (Collegeville, MN).

Standing: Mother Maureen McCabe, OCSO, (Wrentham, MA), Sister Mary David Hydro, OSB, Vice President, (St. Leo, FL), Sister Nancy Miller, OSB, President, (Bismarck, ND), Abbot Neal Roth, OSB, (Lacey, WA), Sister Theresa Zoky, OSB, (Erie, PA), Sister Ann Hoffman, OSB, Executive Director, (Erie, PA), Sister Therese Glass, OSB, (Erie, PA), Sister Anne Wambach, OSB, Prioress (Erie, PA)

New Executive Director Appointed



Left to right: Sister Theresa Zoky, OSB and Sister Ann Hoffman, OSB

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as Executive Director of AIM USA. I have enjoyed my first three years as Office Manager and look forward to many more years promoting the work of AIM. It is my hope that we can continue to build and foster relationships with and among Benedictine/Cistercian monasteries. I am thankful to Sr. Theresa Zoky for the years she has led AIM USA and for all she has taught me.

Welcome Sister Christine!



AIM USA welcomes Sister Christine Kosin, OSB as our new Office Manager/MCP Coordinator! Sr. Christine entered the Erie Benedictines in 1962. She has ministered in various positions primarily in Education/Early Childhood and in formation within her community. Sr. Chris says: "I am privileged to begin a new venture with AIM USA, linking monasteries around the world to be formed and shaped by each other."

We are pleased to have Sr. Chris join us. Her prior ministries and her openness to new beginnings will enrich the ministry of AIM USA as it touches the lives of many throughout the world.

2018 Missionary Cooperative Appeals

As part of the national 2018 Missionary Cooperative Plan (MCP), AIM USA was assigned by the Propagation of the Faith to present appeals in nine dioceses in the United States. Four Benedictine oblates and ten Benedictine monastics (seven sisters, two brothers, one priest) gave generously of their time to speak in fourteen parishes within those dioceses.

Money raised through the appeals will be used for funding grants to Benedictine/Cistercian monasteries. Besides requesting financial aid for monasteries in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, the speakers provided awareness of the needs as well as the ministries of the monastics. AIM USA and the monastics of the monasteries support one another in on-going prayer.

Grants

AFRICA

- A community of sisters in **Sri Lanka** will be able to acquire a humidifier to improve production of altar breads.
- A monk from **Eritrea** will study biblical archaeological theology in Rome.

ASIA

- The monks, nuns and sisters of monastic communities in the **Asia Pacific region**, with some participants from **Africa**, will have the opportunity to attend intensive study weeks on the Rule of Benedict.
- Initial formation programs will be provided for seven aspirants and three novices from a community in **India**.

SOUTH AMERICA

- A community in **Brazil** will be able to buy a printing machine to develop the printing shop of the monastery.

Staff Contacts

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Cultural Services Coordinator:

Sister Therese Glass, OSB, missionary@aim-usa.org

Coordinator Missionary Cooperative Program/ Office Manager:

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

“...the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape...’” Matthew 2:13

There is much concern, and much has and is being written about the devastating plight of refugees and migrants in our world today. The numbers are overwhelming! Hard to comprehend!

*“An unprecedented **68.5 million** people around the world have been forced from their homes. Among them are nearly **25.4 million refugees**, over half of whom are children **under the age of 18**. Every minute **30 people** are forced to flee their homes—**44,400 every day**.”

We read the facts and they are staggering! But these “facts” are people, people who are suffering, men, women, and children who are seeking a refuge free from conflict, fear, oppression, persecution, hunger...

St. Benedict commands, “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ...” and again “Great care and

concern are to be shown in receiving poor people and pilgrims, because in them more particularly Christ is received...” (Chapter 53 RB) A mandate has been given each of us. Do we dare to live it out? Let us take note of the message of Pope Francis in his *Address to Participants in the International Forum on “Migration and Peace”*, 21 February 2017 when he states: “...I wish to reaffirm that ‘our shared response may be articulated by four verbs: to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate’”?

Do we receive “the stranger” in our midst? Do we defend the rights of all humans? Do we recognize and value the gifts of others? Do we learn from what other cultures have to offer?

How do we welcome Joseph, the child and his mother as they escape...?

Blessings as we ponder these questions during this Christmas Season,

Theresa Zoky, OSB

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

*Global Sisters Report: The World Refugee Crisis, a Project of the National Catholic Reporter