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*Let him easter in us,
be a dayspring
to the dimness of us.*

Gerard Manley Hopkins

AIM USA

New AIM USA Board Member



Sr. Karen Joseph, OSB, member of the Sisters of St. Benedict in Ferdinand, Indiana, has joined the AIM USA Board of Trustees. Sr. Karen, formerly a member of the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Clyde, MO, has served in various leadership roles throughout her monastic life, has been involved in committees on the international level within the Benedictine Order and has given retreats and workshops

in Benedictine spirituality to Benedictines throughout North America. She has participated in the Monastic Studies Program at St. John's, Collegeville, MN and has served as a staff member of the Benedictine Women's Rome Renewal Program for the past four years. Sister Karen works in the Spirituality Ministry Program of the Ferdinand Benedictines.

Lent 2011 Grants

Your support enables us to fund the following requests this year.

- bread baking machine, Benedictine sisters in Twasana, South Africa
- a scholarship for studies for a formation director, OCist monks in Vietnam
- jam processing equipment, Cistercian sisters in Ecuador
- spirituality books in Portuguese, Benedictine and Cistercian monastics in Brazil & Angola
- monastic studies and secondary education, Benedictine and Cistercian sisters in Africa



BREAD BAKING MACHINE—BENEDICTINE SISTERS, TWASANA, SOUTH AFRICA—Sister Imelda with Sister Martin and two novices in the bakery.

This year,
 due to increasing postage and printing costs,
 AIM will be printing and mailing
 only two issues of the newsletter.
 The third issue (SUMMER)
 will be published only online.

PLEASE SEND US

YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

so that we can inform you when this issue is available
and tell you how to access it.

We still have news to share with you
and we don't want you to miss any issues!

To see any issue of the AIM USA newsletter
in full color go to our website:www.aim-usa.org

Additional 2010 Monastery to Monastery Members

- St. Scholastica Monastery, Boerne, TX
- St. Walburga Monastery, Elizabeth, NJ
- Monastery of the Ascension, Jerome, ID
- St. Gregory's Abbey, Shawnee, OK
- St. Benedict's Monastery, Snowmass, CO
- St. Anselm's Abbey, Washington, DC

New Journal of DIM.MID Announced

The new website of DIM.MID (www.dimmid.org) has announced a new journal, *Dilatato Corde*, that is now available online. Launched in 2011, *Dilatato Corde*, is an international, multi-language journal rooted in the Christian monastic experience of interreligious dialogue, an experience shaped by listening, respect, contemplation and hospitality. The name of the journal is taken from the Rule of Saint Benedict, which invites those who follow the monastic life to run the way of God's commandments with an "expanded heart." (Prologue, 49) *Dilatato Corde* features contributions from spiritual practitioners and scholars of different religious traditions who wish to examine this form of interreligious dialogue.



- Our 16-minute DVD on the works of AIM, especially the USA secretariat, is available at no cost, to groups and individuals. Just ask: email, phone or write. We appreciate your help in promoting the mission of AIM.



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

St. Martin's Abbey Lacey, Washington

In 1894, Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, sent two monks to found Holy Rosary parish for German-speaking immigrants in Tacoma, Washington. After a year, the monks looked for a place to build a permanent monastery. They chose a large piece of land in an undeveloped area of what is now Lacey, Washington. They then started a school with one student, who legend has it, canoed across Puget Sound to the school. The school took the normal route of development – grade school to high school to college and a few years ago to a university. Although the principal ministry in the beginning was education, the monks also serviced parishes from Port Angeles to Seattle, from Aberdeen to at least four parishes in the city of Tacoma. Monks still are involved in parishes and hospital chaplaincies, but most active monks today are involved in the university.

The monks gather four times a day for Lauds, Noon Prayer, Vespers and Mass in the Abbey Church. Architects, along with a committee of monks, designed the church, acclaimed at the time to be one of the first churches designed with Vatican II in mind. The church was built with simplicity of style that is in tune with the environment. Square, colored windows sparkle brightly on sunny



Benedictine Brothers Nicholas Wilson and Mark Bonneville are digging the grave for one of their confreres.

days—rare in the Pacific Northwest. The design of the church allows for creating different liturgical settings for different seasons of the church. This church in honor of Saint Martin of Tours is the center of the monastery and university.

At present, most Benedictine institutions of higher learning, including Saint Martin's University, are struggling to clarify who they are. They know what they do and how to do it. Benedictine campuses have monasteries on them and monastic women and men who come together to pray as a community each day. Students often come to study at the university because “there are real live monks or sisters on campus.” The curriculum is liberal arts with different professional programs. But what makes all this a “Benedictine



Fr. Gerard Kirsch, OSB, is flanked by Fr. Hugo Lungu, Songea, Tanzania who is working on a MA in Counseling and Fr. Hugo's guest friend.

education”?

This is an ongoing question with which all monastic and religious orders are struggling. We, too, struggle with this issue.

From 1895 to the present, we are still the only Benedictine university on the western-side of the Rocky Mountains.

Saint Martin's University, while still a college, gleaned its students from families whose sons and daughters were the first ones to go to college. It was a focus that enriched our apostolate. In fact, many of the monks were the first in their families to go to college. This is changing with more students whose parents are college graduates. With this focus changing slowly but surely, the university has become more and more involved with international education, making our campus very diverse in nature.

We also offer educational opportunities to monks and sisters from Tanzania; their tuition is covered by St. Martin's. The monks stay at St. Martin's and the sisters at St. Placid Priory, down the road



Br. Nolasko Mwalongo, OSB, Hanga, Tanzania, views some quartz in the monastery's very fine rock collection.

The community is still situated on 360 plus acres that provide a wonderful ecological site that speaks of stewardship. A monk who came here sixty or more years ago finds it hard to believe all the growth that has occurred. Many new buildings have sprung up in the last ten years: a library, a classroom building, a fine arts building, two residence halls, a state-of-the-arts track and soccer field, a recreation/health center. A new engineering building will be built soon.

The monks of Saint Martin's Abbey continue to witness to the Benedictine motto “Ora et Labora.”

African Women's Commission

by Sister Annie Thompson, OSB

On January 18, 2011, Sister Barbara C. Schmitz, Mrs. Carolyn Fuchs and I, Sister Annie Thompson set out on the long journey from Indiana and the Bahamas for the beautiful African country of Uganda.

For Sister Barbara and Carolyn, a woman from Indiana with an interest in African monasticism, this was their first time to Africa so there was eager anticipation and expectations. They were not disappointed. After a long, but exciting plane ride we arrived in Entebbe at 8:15 p.m. and were warmly welcomed by two of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters from Jinja, Uganda, which would be our first stop. Relieved to have arrived safely, we were looking forward to spending the night in Kampala, but that plan was changed; we would have to drive for four hours in the convent's van to Jinja.

Mohammed, the driver set out with determination and great confidence. Finally, after what seemed like a ride to the end of the world, we arrived at the entrance of the Convent of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing in Jinja about midnight. Many of the sisters had waited up to greet us and gave us a very warm welcome.



It wasn't all work—Sr. Annie Thompson gives Sr. Anne Pia Aloba a guitar lesson in Jinja.

In Jinja we were joined by the Sisters of Grace and Compassion from Irundu for the classes. In January they had opened a school for 500 students; they have a clinic for the local people and are very active in the local parish. The Missionary Sisters in Jinja also manage a clinic, administer a grade school and work closely with the people in Jinja.

We taught each morning from 9:30–noon, presenting themes from the *Rule of Benedict*, *History of the Cistercian Order* and the *Enneagram*. There was a great interest in the Enneagram at all the gatherings. They said it helped them better understand themselves and others in the community.

We experienced a remarkable baptism ceremony in Irundu where 122 boys and girls and 17 babies were baptized. We were then off to Tororo. On our way there we had a flat tire which took a few hours to repair. Because of that we arrived later than was expected; however, once again we were welcomed with open and friendly arms. The sisters, tired and worn from the day's activities, came and visited with us and made us feel at home.

The Benedictine Nuns of the Blessed Sacrament in Tororo sell vestments, hosts and farm produce for a source of income.



Sr. Mary Lutgard Tumuramy of St. Benedict Priory in Tororo and the monks of Christ the King Monastery, also in Tororo, gather with Sr. Barbara Schmitz.

We were joined by nine brothers from the Benedictine Fathers of St. Ottilien. The monks have an extensive eye clinic including a hospital. They also run a school specializing in trade skills for boys and girls.

After a week in Tororo our next stop was Arua with the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. They have just recently adopted the Benedictine way of life so, understandably, there were many questions about Benedictinism. Little things that we take for granted were brand new to them and needed explanation.

Our final stop was at the Trappistines in Butende, Masaka. Here we were asked to present the history of the Cistercian Fathers. The interaction and sharing on all of the topics was delightful. We were also joined here by two of the monks from the nearby Benedictine



Sr. Barbara Schmitz relaxes with Mother Jacinta Okusaru in the courtyard of the guest house before class at Holy Trinity Monastery in Arua.

Priory. These monks were refugees from Kenya and are now establishing themselves just outside of Masaka.

The music at the “Opus Dei” and the Mass was always a delight with the African flavor of drums and shakers. Meeting and interacting with our

Benedictine Sisters and Brothers made a profound impression on us. In addressing the specific topics from the Rule of Benedict, Sister Barbara and I felt that we were able to renew with them Benedictine values and traditions of listening, obedience, humility and of keeping a healthy balance between prayer and work.

This mission was a joy-filled one. We feel blessed to have shared with so many wonderful Benedictines and Cistercians.



Photos provided by Barbara C. Schmitz, OSB

Monasterio de La Encarnación—Peru

by Fr. David Bird, OSB

Our monastery was founded in Tambogrande, Peru, in 1979 at the urging of the archbishop of Piura. He believed that every diocese should have a spirituality center and he believed that a monastery would fill that role.

He asked the Tyburn nuns from England who had a foundation in Sechura in the Diocese of Piura if they could suggest a monastery that he could contact. The year before, Abbot Jerome of Belmont Abbey in England had led the retreat so Belmont Abbey was suggested as a founding monastery.

We began life in the parish of Tambogrande, simultaneously attempting to found a monastery while running a parish of 80,000 to 100,000 people. We decided that Father Paul Stonham would continue the work of founding a monastery while Fr. Luke and I continued working in the parish.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the difficulties of bringing to birth a new monastic house under the conditions we faced. Many men came to the monastery—very few fitted for monastic life—and of all who came, only Br. Luis stayed. He was to become the first monk to be solemnly professed on Peruvian soil. The situation often looked hopeless and it was a very difficult time for Fr. Paul and Br. Luis but they persevered.

Life in the San Lorenzo monastery was made difficult by intense heat, inadequate supplies of water and electricity and a tremendous surplus of mosquitoes. The rains would isolate the monastery for days because the lane to the monastery became a quagmire.

All the domestic work was done by the monks and they worked on the farm, gathering lemons and bananas once a month and mangoes in the summer. They grew their own vegetables and had a few animals from time to time. There were over 20 beehives supplying honey for sale.

With the help of AIM, Fr. Paul was able to bring a regular supply of electricity to the monastery and later extend it to the village.

In 1992, Fr. Joseph came from Belmont. After Fr. Luis's ordination, the extremely large parish of Cruceta was divided, with each of the priests being responsible for one-third of it. AIM provided a parish house in Cruceta and Fr. Joseph became the resident priest. Fr. Luis at the time went to Lima to care for his mother after his father died. He rejoined us when we moved to Lima. Four other monks who are now in solemn vows joined us during that period.



Brother José Luis Sanchez, OSB finishes work on a paschal candle.

Fr. Paul was elected abbot of Belmont Abbey in 2000. Fr. Simon McGurk became superior of the monastery and I was invited to help with formation of the monks. Relations with the people surrounding the monastery continued to develop and deepen, with the monastery becoming the spiritual center that was envisioned.

The young monks attend Catechism classes on Sundays and do manual work during the week. The community grew and there are now 11 Peruvian monks. Presently, I am the only Englishman in our community. In 2006 we moved to Pachacamac to the south of Lima. This spot was chosen because there was a community of Cistercian nuns close by in Lurin and Fr. Paul thought the two communities could encourage each other, which we do.

We contribute to our support in various ways. Br. Wilmer, who is in charge of the kitchen, makes jams and bottles honey that comes from our beehives in San Lorenzo. He is also a highly efficient guest master and guests are the source of much of our income. Our guests and visitors are a very varied lot. Priests, religious and committed lay people come for a few days of silence and prayer, “desert” days and meetings. Many of our guests have taught at universities. A benefactor constructed a “Cross of St. Benedict” on a hill overlooking the monastery and it has become a place of pilgrimage.

Br. Percy is bursar and sacristan, makes rosaries, Eastern prayer ropes and very original greeting cards. We make candles and there is a growing demand from parishes for paschal candles. The candles were beautifully painted by Br. Alex until he went to study theology in Oxford, England. Br. José has now taken over and is also very talented at the task.



The monks clear a path up the hillside to the monastery.

Even with all our efforts we are only able to provide about half of our normal, everyday expenses, the other half comes from England. Support from AIM has enabled us to lay out our garden and carry on a project of forestation. We are very grateful for this, especially for the help in financing the studies of the young monks.

Letters—Worth Noting...Worth Quoting

Little Flower Project Update

More news from the Little Flower Project in China. (Pg. 6 in Vol. 19 #3) I want to share the achievements of two of our children, Ying and Qing. Remember, all our children are abandoned and disabled. They can be adopted but many who come to us as babies are with us their entire life.

Ying is in the fifth grade. The school she attends publishes compositions of three of its students in their paper each school term—hers was published. Very seldom does a girl's work get published. She was the top academic performer and was named "The 3 Excellence Student," first in academic performance, first in correct thinking and outstanding good health. We are very proud of her—as we are of all our children.

Tian Qing is in the fourth grade and he also received the Excellent Student award. In his Annual Evaluation Booklet he

wrote that his favorite activities are to play table tennis and the piano and to jump rope. Qing has only one hand so maybe it's his dream that he can play the piano and jump rope. He can do many things and better with his one hand than other children can do with two.

Our Little Prince, Bing, came to us a month after his birth in February 2010. In early January Bing stood alone and received his first "standing" ovation. We celebrate each accomplishment.

Sister Gertrude Kim, OSB
Beijing, China



Bing standing alone for the first time.

Book Service

These are a few of the many letters we receive from the monasteries to which we send books. Each letter asks us to thank all those who have donated the books. Almost all the books in the libraries of these monasteries have come from AIM USA as they have no access to libraries and no money to purchase books.

The gift of precious books—we are so grateful. Some of the books in English we will send to a school for poor children near our monastery. They study English and I'm sure this will help them in their studies. In fact, we ourselves also need to learn English so they will help us, too.



We make biscuits and Easter candles to help support ourselves but we have no way of buying books. Thank you.

Sr. Maria Aparecida, OSB
Mosteiro de Nossa Senhora de Vitoria, Brazil

The books you sent to us have enriched our library, enabling us to nurture our spiritual life and intellectual ability through reading, sharing and reflection.

Sr. Mildrate Nekesa, OSB
Benedictine Sisters of Divine Providence
Kenya, Africa

The books you sent are precious and very useful for our community. We, as a community of formation, need to have a good library.

Fr. Dominic Kochupuracksal, OSB
Vanashram, Bangalore, India



Two Ohio Wesleyan students working in the book room during their semester break visit to Erie.

On behalf of the monks and all the residents in the surrounding villages I acknowledge your generous donation of books. Also thank you for the Mass stipends you sent to us. The masses were celebrated and the stipends contributed significantly to our farming projects and agro-forestry and to the education at nearby Katibunga Basic and High Schools.

Fr. Willibrord Nzota, OSB
Katibunga Benedictine Monastery, Zambia

We are very grateful for the mass stipends you sent to us. They came just in time for us to pay our water and electricity bills.

The Mass is always celebrated in our chapel and we also remember at our morning and evening prayer all those for whom the Mass is being offered.

Sr. Mary Clare Mukyala, OSB
St. Benedict's Priory, Tororo, Uganda



Sheila McLaughlin, a member of the AIM USA staff, checks in a newly-arrived box of books.

The box of books was indeed a wonderful gift! The books, the “Monastic Way” (the publication we were longing for) and the magazines are very useful for our community because the number of sisters who can read English is increasing.

Madre Miriam de Castro, OSB
Mosteiro São João, Brazil

Thank you so much for the box of books you sent to us. The books are very useful to us and the English is not too difficult.

Fr. Ogechukwu Ibe, OCSO
Delta State, Nigeria

As a modest and initial response to the increasing number of homeless people, the Missionary Benedictine Sisters have started *Tuluyan*, a drop-in shelter for homeless families. It is a temporary haven in the daytime where the homeless can rest awhile, wash themselves and their clothes, use the bathroom and cook meals.

Tuluyana is not the answer to the root cause of homelessness and poverty but for now, in some small way, it gives rest to weary individuals and families. Hopefully, *Tuluyan*'s programs and services will help them cross the poverty line and make it to the other side.

Sr. Baptista Busmente, OSB
St. Scolastica's Priory
Manila, Philippines

The support of AIM USA made it possible for CIMBRA (the Brazilian Monastic Conference) to hold the first session of a two-year Program for Formators in November 2010.



Participants in the CIMBRA Conference

The group of 26 who attended the program heard about some of the challenges for monastic life today and was led through a biblical reflection about Discipleship. Dr. Cynthia Rossi, a lay Catholic psychologist who has devoted her life to working with men and women religious, was very well received as she addressed Human Development, Affectivity and Sexuality. Bishop João Carlos Petrini spoke on the social and ecclesiastical view of monasticism. The other presenters were Brazilian monastics.

The participants look forward to the second session in November 2011 and hope that more will follow it.

Madre Vera Lúcia Parreiras Horta, OSB
Mosteiro do Salvador, Brazil

Gratitude To and From Translators

BEGINNING IN 2003 the AIM USA newsletter has been translated into Portuguese and Spanish and sent along with a copy in English to 170 mission monasteries. The Portuguese version goes to Brazil and Angola; the Spanish version goes to 80 monasteries in Central and South America.

In 2007 a monk from Madagascar offered to do the translation into French and this is sent to 65 mission monasteries in Africa, Caribbean, Japan, Israel and Vietnam.

There are presently seven who translate into Portuguese, eight into Spanish and one into French. In each future issue of the newsletter, we will introduce you to two of the translators.



To be a translator means to show respect for the Spanish language and to encourage its use in any way possible. It is one way to reach out to Spanish speaking people and express my gratitude for all the joy, enrichment and connections their language has brought me. Translating for AIM, I get to read in depth the articles and letters from my monastic sisters and brothers in every corner of our Earth, to hear what they say

about God at work in our lives, and to spread this good news.

Virginia Jung, OSB
St. Scholastica Monastery, Chicago, IL USA

First of all, thanks very much to the AIM USA for accepting me in the “team” of translators. Translating the newsletter is above all a wonderful way of serving our worldwide monastic family.



Very monastic too, because it's a silent and hidden way of serving and yet you take a real responsibility since you have to express in your own language not only words and ideas, but what the authors themselves are feeling and living in America, Asia or Africa. It is a work of communion. I like it and I have been doing it for years for our Congregation of Subiaco, if not for my own conversion and pleasure, translating several books sent by AIM. While studying English at the university (40 years ago !) and already determined to join a Benedictine monastery, I offered my work to the Lord, knowing that I would not be a high school or university teacher like my friends, but the Lord repaid me a hundred times over: thanks be to God !

Fr. Christophe Vuillaume, OSB
Monastère Bénédictin Masian Maria, Mahitsy, Madagascar

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

The Lenten Scriptures have a new meaning this year. As we hear once more the Exodus story of God delivering the Israelites from slavery we realize that this story of oppression did not end with the Israelites for we see this struggle taking place yet today.

Faces and names change, yet the plot remains the same. In their longing to be free, people living in oppression are rising up and crying out for liberation. Moses, in many different voices, is once again shouting to the rulers, "Let my people go."

As I write this letter, hundreds of thousands in Northern Africa and the Middle East are engaged in massive protests against oppressive regimes. Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq continue to rage while many here in the United States cry out to our government officials to bring our troops home and end this senseless violence. In Wisconsin people have taken over the capitol building demanding that unions not be stripped of their right to collective bargaining.

In the face of all these struggles it is easy to be tempted to despair. Yet Easter reminds us that we are called to freedom and the victory has already been won. Jesus has conquered death. We are

called to be Resurrection people. As we gather for the Easter vigil this year let us "listen with the ear of our heart" to the recounting of the stories of our salvation history. And as we chant the psalms in the daily Liturgy of the Hours let us lift up in prayer our suffering brothers and sisters around the world who long for the freedom Christ brings. As monastic men and women let us recommit to be signs of hope and joy in our troubled world. Let us celebrate Easter by living in such a way that our daily actions witness to our conviction that LIFE is stronger than death, LOVE is stronger than hatred, GOOD is stronger than evil. This is the good news of our faith. Let us BE that good news!

In the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins,

"Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us."

Amen! Alleluia!

Stephanie Schmidt, OSB

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