

Alliance Inter-Monastères

Newsletter, 2022 - 2



Dear brothers, dear sisters, dear friends,

We wish you all the best in this Christmas season. The Lord comes, he lights our way and guides us to the path of peace. This is our hope.

The situation in Ukraine is not improving, and we remain close to the communities that are painfully bearing the fate of a whole people and, more broadly, the world balance. Many efforts have been made for a real solidarity. The International Communion for Benedictine Women (CIB) has been particularly active. The communities in Poland have been very welcoming to the refugees. The witness of fraternity in these times of crisis is particularly impressive in and around the monasteries. Nor do we forget the countries of Africa affected by war. We remain close to the needs of each other as much as possible. Despite all these tensions, the regular life of prayer, work and hospitality continues in each monastery in an admirable way.



Power outage at the monastery in Lviv.

SYNOD ON SYNODALITY

We continue to pay attention to the preparation of the Synod on Synodality. The last AIM Bulletin (no. 123) presented a number of contributions. I would like to emphasise here the article on the experience of synodality as lived by the community of Tibhirine. It seems to me that this text can serve as a reference for advancing along this path so that communities can experience a real renewal. It is not enough to read this article, but to see concretely how to implement it in each of our communities.

Synodality is intrinsically part of the treasure of our monastic tradition. It would be good to give new relevance to this dimension. The recent preparatory document for the Synod, "Enlarge the space of your tent", deserves to be read and worked on.

THE BENEDICTUS FOUNDATION

We have already mentioned the creation of the *Benedictus* Foundation. This organisation is still on its way. It takes time for such a reality to take off. Jérôme De Leusse, its president, and Sister Christine, the secretary general of AIM, are working hard to find good collaborators and to achieve the best results.

The purpose of the Foundation under the aegis of *Caritas-France* is to provide moral and financial support for social, cultural, economic and environmental development activities, in the service of the promotion and dignity of disadvantaged populations, in connection with monastic foundations throughout the world, living under the rule of Saint Benedict, outside Western Europe and North America. The Foundation can issue tax receipts, which is not the case for AMTM and AIM.



This sheltered Foundation complements the work of the Inter-Monastery Alliance, which continues to receive direct financial support from monasteries, various organisations and individuals in order to support all projects relating to training, construction and renovation of specifically religious buildings, as well as the commercial activities of the monasteries. The association *Les Amis des Monastères à Travers le Monde* (AMTM) pursues an awareness-raising action to support the life of monasteries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Oceania and Eastern Europe.

The *Benedictus* Foundation on the Caritas-France website:

<https://www.fondationcaritasfrance.org/fondations/fondation-benedictus/>

Make a donation through the *Benedictus* Foundation:

<https://don.fondationcaritasfrance.org/fondation-benedictus>

Make a donation directly to AIM:

<https://www.aimintl.org/fr/2015-05-29-13-28-49/soutenir-nos-projets>

Do not hesitate to make this Foundation known and, if you have projects that fall within this framework, send us your contribution which will immediately entitle you to a tax deduction (on French territory).

NEWS

Africa

South Africa - BECOSA

Male and female superiors from South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe will meet in February 2023 for their next BECOSA session.

East Africa

The monasteries in Tanzania are sending more and more requests for help to AIM. We are delighted that Father Christian Temu, abbot of Ndanda, is actively present in Tanzania. He has been working with us for some time as a member of the International Team.

West Africa

The Studium created by the monastery of Bouaké in the Ivory Coast was a great success in 2021-2022 with more than twenty students coming from the monasteries of West Africa. It would be desirable to make this quality Studium known beyond West Africa. The organisers suggest that the monasteries in Europe send one or two students at least for the preparatory year. This would be a very enriching experience both in terms of introduction to the studies, but also in terms of sharing fellowship and awareness of other cultures and approaches to Church and monastic life. After this preparatory year, it would always be possible either to continue on the spot or to undertake a course in a faculty, in the seminary, in STIM or in Sant'Anselmo in Rome.



Nigeria

The first batch of the BECAN Monastic Institute ended with the graduation of students in 2020 after three years of operation.

At the last meeting of the BECAN superiors from 26-30 April this year, held at Nike Abbey, the BECAN superiors voted unanimously to transfer the BECAN Monastic Institute to St. Benedict's Monastery in Ewu Ishan. The guest house in Ewu became the centre of the Monastic Institute in August this year. The programme is designed to last two months each year for two years.

From August to September 2022, the training for the twenty new students took place.

India - ISBF

The last meeting of the ISBF took place at Asirvanam Abbey from 19 to 27 April 2022, still under the chairmanship of Fr James Milackal. The next meeting will take place from 12 to 16 February 2023. One day will be devoted to inter-religious dialogue. Other topics will be synodality in monastic life and the post-COVID period in the communities.

Latin America - ABECCA association

The last meeting of ABECCA was held in November. It elected a new president in the person of Father Humberto Rincón Fernández, abbot of the abbey of Guatapé (Colombia). He succeeds Father Alex Echeandía, superior of the community of Lurín (Peru). The latter, together with the members of the Bureau, has done a remarkable job of restructuring and re-launching this organisation, which extends over a very wide region and therefore includes a large number of monasteries in various contexts (Northern Latin America and the Caribbean).



International

General Chapters

The General Chapters of the two Cistercian Orders met during the year 2022. The Chapter of the Trappists (OCSO) elected a new Abbot General, Dom Bernardus Peeters, who immediately called upon the whole Order to express the dreams of its members. A process of synodality was thus undertaken and lived during the two major sessions of this Chapter in February and September. It was truly a beautiful event.



I had the joy of sharing a moment at the General Chapter of the Cistercians (OCist), where Dom Mauro Giuseppe Lepori was re-elected Abbot General, and I could feel the desire for unity, peace and also the audacity to face the future in a concerted manner.

CIB

The CIB met in Rome, at the General House of the sisters in Tutzing. Sister Christine participated in this event. Lynn McKenzie was re-elected as CIB Moderator. The conferences can be found on the CIB website.



AIM

Meetings

The AIM Council met in November at Ampleforth Abbey, in England. We welcomed several new members: Dom Bernardus Peeters (Tilburg, Netherlands), the new Abbot General of the Trappists, Mother Anna Brennan, Abbess of Stanbrook, Mother Franziska Lukas, Abbess of Dinklage, Fr David d'Hamonville, former Abbot of En-Calcat and Visitor of the French Province of the Congregation of Sub-Catholic. David d'Hamonville, former abbot of En-Calcat and visitor to the French Province of the Congregation of Subiaco Mont-Cassin.



The Executive Committee was renewed and is now composed of Fr. Javier Aparicio Suárez, Procurator of the Congregation of Sankt Ottilien, Sr. Gloria Dungca, Vicar of the Prioress General of the Sisters of Tutzing, Fr Luc Torcal, Procurator General of the Cistercian Order; and, of course, the President and the Secretary of AIM.

During this Council, many topics were discussed; the conference of Fr Robert Igo, presenting his experience of returning to Ampleforth after many years as Superior in Zimbabwe, was particularly noted. It will be published in the next AIM bulletin.

The AIM Bulletin

The AIM Bulletin continues to be published twice a year. The French, English and German language bulletins are published at almost the same time. The Italian version, which is a selection of texts from the full Bulletin, is working well. The Portuguese version is a little late, due to the time-consuming translation and proofreading. The Spanish version was handled by the Manquehue movement (Chile); the pandemic and other difficulties have slowed down the production of the Bulletin. Bulletins 121 and 122 will not be printed, but the articles will soon be posted on the AIM website. The community of Lurín (Peru) has agreed to take over the production of the Bulletin in Spanish. We hope that the Bulletin will appear more regularly in the future. We would like to express our warm and fraternal thanks to the Manquehue team, and especially to Mariana Echenique, for their dedication, sympathy and enthusiasm.



In addition, it seems that the postal delivery of the Bulletin in a number of Latin American countries is not reliable. We are considering the possibility of sending a digital version of the Bulletin to those communities that would like it.

Call for donations

This letter is an opportunity to thank all those who support AIM in the projects we receive each year. If you have not already done so, you can make a contribution for the year 2023. Thank you in advance for your generosity. You will find enclosed the form for such a donation. If you would like to receive a tax receipt (in the name of your company for example), please make a donation to the *Benedictus* Foundation.

Once again, on behalf of AIM, we wish you and all your communities a very happy Christmas. To all of you and to all our friends, comfort and joy in the midst of trials and may the light of Christ illuminate the new year.

Fraternally yours

Fr. Jean-Pierre Longeat

President of AIM

Secrétariat de l'Alliance Inter-Monastères

7 rue d'Issy - 92170 Vanves - France

Tel.: +33 (0)1 46 44 79 57

info@aimintl.org or aim.vanves@wanadoo.fr

allianceintermonasteres@aimintl.org

For the Bulletin: bulletinaim@gmail.com

AIM Bank account:

Alliance Inter Monastères

CAISSE D'ÉPARGNE ILE-DE-FRANCE

Agence Économie sociale Saint-Quentin

14 avenue du Centre

78067 Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines Cedex

France

RIB: 17515 90000 08017951995 25

BIC: CEPFRPP751

IBAN: FR76 1751 5900 0008 0179 5199 525