

---



# aim usa

The United States Secretariat of the Alliance for International Monasticism

[www.aim-usa.org](http://www.aim-usa.org)

Volume 31 No. 1 2022

[aim@aim-usa.org](mailto:aim@aim-usa.org)

---

Recherchez la paix

Buscar la paz

Chèche lapè

Busca la paz

Nabad doon

Bariş Aramak

Ищите мира

Suche Frieden

*Seek Peace*

ابتغِ السَّلام

Szukaj pokoju

Шукай миру

Neangan Damai





# Peace I leave with you...

AIM USA staff requested monasteries to share their experiences with the poor. All reflections from the monasteries have been edited by the AIM USA staff with the permission of the authors. Their responses follow.

## From Ukraine

As I write this reflection on the theme of peace, sirens echo throughout the country. The explosions continue one after another ...

In this context, while our cities live in anticipation of missile attacks, you ask us how we envision the road to peace. Russian terrorists kill our children every day, they have been underground for two months just to survive ... without sun or heat.

You ask me how we manage to keep calm ...

We are not afraid, because the worst has already happened and is happening. We are not in the least afraid for our lives, we are however deeply disturbed that so many lives are violently interrupted, the innocent, small, tortured...



Photo credit: Immaculate Conception Abbey

Sisters continue daily monastic office and Mass.

We see the distressed faces of those who managed to escape, they are lost in the uncertainty of tomorrow ... they don't know how to live after the violent experience. Through their tears we offer them a smile, we assure them that all they have suffered is over ... They are surprised that we smile because they have forgotten how to smile ... A woman thanked me for the smile saying: "I know you smile to support us but you cry when no one sees"...

All we can do is give them the opportunity to live and smile, or at least moderately relieve their pain for what they have lost and offer them what the invaders have stolen, to accept this new reality. We encourage them to mourn every victim of this war, but at the same time to pick themselves up and serve others.

For Saint Benedict, peace was not just an affective state, a pleasant or comfortable emotion. We know that peace always costs. Etymologically it means - intertwining diversity. It is like a plexus - the fruit of confronting contradictions together .. it is the result of struggle. And we are in the process of this great struggle for peace and justice.

In Prologue 17, Benedict encourages the monks to "seek peace and pursue it". Referring to the text of Ephesians 2:14 it can be said that peace is not something, but is Someone ... not a state of being, but the person of Christ and we are at peace when we are in Him. Consequently, the Church, in every Eucharist, raises the Host and prays "*Dona nobis pacem*".

To some extent, we experience this by accepting a diversity of people here, who come from different parts of Ukraine, some speak Russian, who before the war, had conflicting views on life and politics. Poor and rich ... Orthodox and non-believers. What's more, among them there is a Russian citizen ... Opening our doors for everyone is not easy ...

But many barriers are collapsing here. Many borders have been erased and even if social differences cannot be eliminated, we live in serenity.

This is our process to peace, of welcoming everyone and creating *koinonia* within the Church. To support one another through the tensions that diversity creates, fostering good organization and constructive dialogue.

But peace is also based on justice, that is, on giving to each according to one's needs.

Benedict did not distance himself but responded to the societal problems and crises of his time, be they political, social or humanitarian.

That which gives interior strength now is a robust sense of communion.

To be present among them ... not just reading the horrific news or remaining safe by removing oneself from the situation, observing from afar ...

As a Benedictine community, we continue to pray here on our own soil and despite the constant alarms, we strive to keep up with the rhythm of the Liturgy of the Hours. The Psalms now resound louder than ever and we pray not only through the mouth, the mind and the heart, but with every bone, the whole being cries out for help and for the peace that only God can offer.

We beg for peace not for ourselves, but for those who need it most: the children, the soldiers who stand guard day and night to curb the attacks. We are fascinated by their resilience and their faith.

The experiences are diverse: on the one hand, the ardent and zealous search for God's response to all this horror. On the other hand, when you search for something, you become vulnerable to every word, you catch every word as the air to your breath.

And sometimes there is a sensation that all is useless and makes no sense ..., but you continue to sing and follow the set hours ... prayer seems very tense and not always in harmony with the heart, because there is too much pain.

Above our oratory lives a family from Mariupol, the sound of our singing reaches their room. One day they asked if they can come down and listen to the singing, if they can be where the sisters sing. It gives them a sense of peace. Nothing out of the ordinary - just Gregorian chant.

Mother Klara Sviderska, OSB  
Immaculate Conception Abbey, Ukraine



# My Peace I give to you. (John: 14:27)

## From Syria

Our foundation here in Syria bears the name, “Our Lady Source of Peace”. We gather as brothers and sisters, Christians and Muslims or of other faiths, around the figure of Mary (as we can experience in a very touching way at the shrine of Harissa, in Lebanon) to turn to Her as the one who is the source of true Peace, who is Christ.

In this name, perhaps, is already present the deepest meaning of the presence of a monastic community in a land so scarred by war and disfigured by lies: to become a place where Christ can once again and always quench humanity’s thirst for life.

It is not through our efforts at modern humanism, it is not because we are open-minded, enlightened people, or simple lovers of differences, that we can hope for true peace for all. Good feelings are not enough, especially in a situation of such profound Evil as we have seen acting in our country.

Peace can only come from the truth, the truth about humans, about their destiny, their dignity, and therefore from Christ, who reveals to us the true face of the human being as Son.

This is the path that Cistercian monastic life, helps us to walk, even with all our frailty and sin; and this is why being present in a place where there is war and suffering is important, beyond what we can do. We have tangible proof of this in the fact that more and more people come to our guesthouse to find peace, serenity and strength in prayer.

The Syrians, after eleven years of war, wish to be able to return to a peaceful and dignified life, a life that offers hope for their children. There are areas where fighting is going on, but even where direct fighting has ended, the destruction of infrastructure, and even more so of the social and economic fabric, makes it difficult to hope for a dignified future. Eighty-five percent of the population is below the poverty line. Some are literally starving. When wars of a certain kind end, mafias gain strength, strangling the existence of the poorest. This really puts people’s souls to the test, and unfortunately still today many, if they have the chance, leave the country.

What are we doing about all this? On the one hand, nothing except what St. Benedict and St. Scholastica have been inviting us to do for centuries: to be here, stable, “lovers of the place” and its people.

But with a new conscience, or at least a reawakened one: that is, with the awareness that these truly apocalyptic times, of an ever more evident struggle between good and evil, challenge us to give answers “that make us a real, possible presence of peace”.

We do this through prayer, thought, and works.

Prayer: there can be no peace without God. Everything around us can change, but in the end we live by what we have inside, not by what is around us”. It is by grounding ourselves in God’s peace that we can live with a smile on our faces, despite everything....

Thought: our first task as monks, is to have a vision, a clear anthropology, founded on the creation and redemption of humanity; the teaching of our Cistercian fathers becomes precious for the path of faith, and enlightens our minds in discerning the political, economic and social events that manipulate and condition the life of humanity today. We want our monastery to become more and more a “place of vision”, shared with those who walk with us towards the Kingdom...And a place of human and Christian formation, so important today.

Works: although we too are affected by the reality that surrounds us, and work and fatigue are not lacking, we are still and always fortunate people, who lack nothing essential. We cannot fail to take care of the poverty that surrounds us, material poverty but also spiritual poverty. Peace needs a certain serenity of life, that’s why we try to help with small work projects (small handicrafts for women, the purchase of a few cows for young people who after ten years of military service find themselves with nothing in their hands, economic help for school, university, diseases...)

But above all, we work with our hands, “planning” small and large things for the future, despite our precariousness and that which surrounds us. And this too helps those who meet us, sustains hope, makes beauty and peace flourish...

Mother Marta Luisa Fagnani, OCSO  
Fons Pacis Monastery, Syria



Sisters of Fons Pacis Monastery

Photo credit: Fons Pacis Monastery

## Support The Mission Of AIM USA

*Your financial support is greatly appreciated!*

AIM USA is a 501 (c) 3 organization. All contributions to AIM USA are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

Please make checks payable to: **AIM USA.**

Send to: **345 East 9 St. Erie, PA 16503**  
or use our **PayPal account**

<https://www.aim-usa.org>



## Peace I leave with you...

### From Nigeria

***“It is easy for you to preach peace, mercy, forgiveness and tolerance when you have not been there!”***

This was the angry outburst of an aspirant to our monastery, who came from one of these regions with prevalent religious violence. He came face to face with death; he was the only survivor; the rest were set ablaze and burnt to death by Islamist extremists. “If you have been there you will guard your tongue when you speak of ‘mercy,’ love for enemies and forgiveness.”

During one of his last conversations with the disciples, Jesus said: “When I sent you out without a purse or haversack or sandals, were you short of anything?” The disciples said: “No, nothing. Jesus said to them, but now if you have a purse, take it and the same with the haversack; if you have no sword, sell your cloak and buy one.” Then the disciples said, “Lord, here are two swords, Jesus told them, ‘That is enough.’” LK 22:35-38.

Then at the night of the attack and arrest of Jesus, while they were in the garden, His followers, seeing what was about to happen, said, “Lord shall we use our swords?” Jesus didn’t say no, he didn’t restrain them. One of Jesus disciples among those bearing swords, went ahead and struck the high priest servant and cutting off his right ear. Then Jesus said, “That is enough.” Lk.22:51. The point here is that, only after the sword has been effectively used did Jesus tell his disciples to stop, that is enough. The important question for those living in troubled zones today is, what is enough? How much force put against the aggressor is enough? How much of the swords do we need to use before or along side our calling for peace and say, Enough?” There are situations where one finds the concept of peace without the sword a mirage. For several years our monastery was repeatedly being attacked by armed bandits. During these operations, guns were usually fired at random, but no monk was hit by bullets. Nevertheless, these were terrifying moments for the entire community. After one of these attacks, we sat as a community to discuss the issue and ask ourselves, “What can we do?” At the end we decided to get two guns, Enough, only two. The next time the armed bandits came, the monks were ready and responded with fire for fire. At the end we dominated the scene. We fired many rounds of ammunition into the dark sky, the whole place glowing with gun fire, and the bandits abandoned their plans and ran away from the monastery. The two swords or two guns principle is not a very bad idea afterwards!

Nowhere in Nigeria is safe. Our President was in his home state of Katsina surrounded by military might and protection when at that very moment terror bandits broke into a school and kidnapped over 100 children and dragged them into the woods. In March this year these bandits broke into an enclosed Benedictine monastery and went off with three of the young sisters. When they were released the sisters looked less than human. This, for many, was a violation of God’s sanctuary which is the ultimate assault for an African.

Our monastery is flanked by two distinct people. The Ewu people are part Christians, part Muslims and part Native religion (Juju Worship). The Agbede people are predominantly Muslims, the non-Muslims are mostly non-indigenes. However, our relationship with the two groups is very cordial; our position is ecumenical without proselytizing. Everyone is welcome to our monastery irrespective of religious creed. There is a mutual co-existence since we embrace all. Muslims, Christians, men and women work together as one family. The children celebrate the Christian and Muslim feasts. We find Muslim women and men praying at the grotto of Our Lady in Ewu. They usually pray before beginning the daily work.



Photo credit: St. Benedict Monastery

Brother Peter Eghwudjakpor, OSB

Though it seems elusive, we are always dreaming of peace. It is a plea commonly heard at prayers in most gatherings. There are also some common, mutual actions taken by different groups with a bid to promote peace and mutual co-existence. A beautiful and moving example of this is the League of Muslim and Christian women in Northern Nigeria. Whenever there are violent threats or attacks on the Christians, the Muslim women come together and form a ring, holding one another’s hands around the praying Christians and so shield them from potential aggressors. The Christian women do the same for the Muslim women while they are at prayer. There are many good initiatives for peace in this country. We pray God will hearken to our plea.

Brother Peter Eghwudjakpor, OSB  
Saint Benedict Monastery, Ewu, Nigeria

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



## My Peace I give to you. (John: 14:27)

### From Mexico

#### Seeking Justice is Seeking Peace



Photo credit: Pan de Vida Monastery

Sister Mariana Olivo Espinoza, OSB

I want to share with you two of the most difficult realities that we are experiencing in Mexico. I choose these because I am accompanying groups in my city that are seeking their relatives who have disappeared; as well as families who have lost a member to femicide because I am more familiar with these two types of violence. I don't mean to ignore the realities of migrants, serious economic

inequality, the violence that the drug cartels continue to exercise, the ecological crisis resulting from industries responsible for extraction projects and land dispossession, the serious crisis of depression and suicides among young people derived from COVID and many realities.

On the one hand, the crisis of forced disappearances, which has prevailed in Mexico since the so-called Dirty War of the 70's and 80's has intensified in the recent "War on Drugs" from 2006 to 2012. As a result of this war, organized groups are looking for more than 100,000 of their family members, many of whom have disappeared. But according to official figures, groups themselves speak of more than 100,000 missing. Some remains of those missing have been found recently in the many clandestine graves and extermination territories scattered throughout the country.

The other reality refers to the rise in femicides. This year alone, already 227 girls and young women have been murdered in Mexico, most often by someone close to the family, frequently by their partners or ex-partners. Recently, the search and discovery of a young woman (Debhani) in Monterrey, Nuevo León, a city that is only 4 hours from the monastery, received a lot of publicity. An alarming side effect of that case was the fact that as a result of the search for this young woman, the bodies of five other girls were found, three of whom had not been officially reported as missing. We can gather from this that the figures for femicides do not begin to reflect the true reality.

To yearn for peace in my country means to work actively with the families who are seeking missing persons, so that their hearts can be at rest, knowing where their sons and daughters are. It also means to work to improve the legal processes, so that they be carried out by authorities with integrity, as to assure the families of the victims that some justice will be obtained, especially for the hundreds of orphans.

In the midst of this grave situation, I believe that Jesus calls us to stand in solidarity with the families, because up to this time, very few search and femicide groups are accompanied by Christian

communities. I am referring to accompanying them not only with our prayer, but also with other "hands-on, concrete ways, such as supporting them in their very diverse needs, which range from food and money for transportation to continue their search; to emotional and spiritual healing.

I believe that our Benedictine vocation to Listen to the Word can motivate us to listen to the multiple life stories of these families. We incline the ear of our hearts over and over again to accompany them in their crises, depressions, discouragement and in their searches. As we listen we also learn from them as we see and hear the many ways they cling to their God who is always with them. We are invited to open the doors of our hearts and monasteries to these guests, in whose presence we often feel uncomfortable, because of the bloody and violent reality in which they live, but who need our sisterly presence in the midst of their lives as they continue forward and resist many forms of opposition in their search for answers.

Finding peace in our country is seeking justice and healthy living conditions for our impoverished people. It is building a safer society for children, adolescents and young people, providing them with true paths of development with quality education and well-paid jobs. I find peace as I strive to show concrete solidarity within my community. Rather than being an "island" we strive to be a place where people can find shelter and rest, healing and courage.

For us Benedictines who live stability in the heart in a low-income neighborhood, it challenges us to continue finding concrete ways of being neighbors, of collaborating in the search for true life for those around us and respond to their needs.

We do well to begin with our most vulnerable sisters in our own communities, but not to be content with that. Our vocation calls us to go further; to the existential peripheries as Pope Francis has summoned us, to continue creatively imagining forms and relationships that humanize us and humanize the world.

Sister Mariana Olivo Espinoza, OSB  
Pan de Vida Monastery, Mexico

## Mass Offerings

AIM USA sends MASS OFFERINGS to Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. These offerings are extremely important to them, especially in these times. If you wish to remember someone who has died as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic or have another intention, please send it to:

AIM USA  
345 East 9 Street  
Erie PA 16503 USA



# Peace I leave with you...

## From Haiti

### Is Job a Peacemaker?

Take a look at this recent photo of our community, which is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. We are peaceful, simple and fraternal, but as a life force, we are poor as Job. The first question: What does it mean to yearn for peace in your city and country? We answer, our peace is regular and a little pitying. After 40 years how many are there of you? A silence follows my answer: Six present,



Photo credit: Mome St. Benoit

including the former Abbot, Andre de Koubri (left) who came to help us for a few years, a postulant (center), one of the founders, Father Anselm, 83 years old and

three others of us. The second question: How does Jesus guide us to pursue peace? We respond, by following St. Benedict and his call to work. We are in the process of doing some work. We are improving the chapel, the workshops, the water catchment at our source and its conveyance.

In a very troubled country, more troubled than we are, we have not lacked trials over the past 40 years. They include dangers of travel (road blocks and rackateers on the road), thieves (sometimes at gunpoint), kidnappers (priests and religious are not spared), assassins, diseases (cholera- imported unwittingly by UN soldiers a few years ago), land grabbers and more. It sounds like a list that

St. Paul would write in his time. I think his list is more terrifying and yet he speaks of faith and offers a proclamation of grace and therefore, a testimony of peace.

By example St. Paul offers love for his communities, writes letters of encouragement and by his preaching speaks of peace. We are a fraternal and peaceful community accepting guests though these days they are rare due to the insecurity surrounding us. Benevolent Father Anselm writes a monthly letter always encouraging peace. As for preaching we preach in the desert because we no longer have an assembly. In the past there were 30 people from the neighboring village, Carries, who would come on Sundays. In three years Carries was emptied of its population by armed people who took over their properties. Nine people died and 300 people's homes were burned. The police or the administration never came. We ourselves are too weak to know how to defend the poor. A Bishop emeritus who was living with us at the time tried to do so by working with politicians and a generous business man. They found everything was blocked at a very high level of State. The investigation by a Justice and Peace organization failed because witnesses and victims were afraid to speak. We find our actions to be limited, giving cookies to the children, spaghetti or rice to the mothers, sharing water from our spring with the displaced people of Carries.

Poor like Job, who cries even louder than the psalmist, we want to keep his faith and his fidelity. Only God and our neighbors can judge if, as we desire and hope, there is a witness and seed of Peace according to the Spirit of Saint Benedict.

Brother Jacques, Prior  
Morne St. Benoit, Haiti

## From Nigeria

The desire for peace is inherent in us human beings. Yes, we want to enjoy peace, but real-life experience shows that often peace is mingled with violence, war, unrest and tears. In my own country Nigeria, I can say that peace is understood in diverse ways. Some think they are at peace when they have all that they WANT without minding how it is gotten. Others desire real peace. They take everything to God in prayer: chaos, violence, injustice, lack of truth and all kinds of atrocities. They know what they really want and where to get it. Hence, they continue to trust in the Lord of Peace.

Our religion and faith help us to cope with this reality and brings us to appreciate that perfect peace which the world cannot give, and which can only be realized in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus as the King of Peace had concern for all: was selfless, humble and a servant leader.

Since we are longing for peace amidst all these tumults, we need to live a life that is sincere and just in an unjust world. We need to live a life which opposes the evil in the world: seek silence as opposed to the noise outside. We need to be mindful of the weaker ones in the community and seek ways to help them. We need to avoid



Photo credit: Paschal Monastery

greed and condemnation; serving well in the community. We seek humility instead of pride; do to others what one would like done to oneself. In this way our peaceful presence will be manifested in the community, and then in all things God will be glorified.

Mother Ozioma Offor, OSB  
Paschal Monastery, Nigeria



*My Peace I give to you. (John: 14:27)*

## 2021 Monastery to Monastery Program

Christ in the Desert Monastery	Abiquiu	NM	St. Paul's Abbey	Newton	NJ
Mount St. Scholastica Monastery	Atchison	KS	Immaculata Monastery	Norfolk	NE
Marmion Abbey	Aurora	IL	New Melleray Abbey	Peosta	IA
St. Benedict Monastery	Bakerstown	PA	St. Scholastica Priory	Petersham	MA
Our Lady of Grace Monastery	Beech Grove	IN	Abbey of the Genesee	Piffard	NY
Belmont Abbey	Belmont	NC	Mount Saviour Monastery	Pine City	NY
St. Benedict's Abbey	Benet Lake	WI	Woodside Priory	Portola Valley	CA
Incarnation Monastery	Berkeley	CA	Abbey of St. Gregory the Great	Portsmouth	RI
Holy Cross Abbey	Berryville	VA	St. Martin Monastery	Rapid City	SD
New Camaldoli Hermitage	Big Sur	CA	Assumption Abbey	Richardton	ND
Annunciation Monastery	Bismarck	ND	St. Mary Monastery	Rock Island	IL
Monastery of Our Lady in the Desert	Blanco	NM	Our Lady Calvary Abbey	Rogersville	NB
St. Scholastica Monastery	Boerne	TX	The Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Peace	Rutherfordton	NC
St. Benedict Monastery	Bristow	VA	Monastery of the Risen Christ	San Luis Obispo	CA
Our Lady of Guadalupe Trappist Abbey	Carlton	OR	Christ the King Priory	Schuyler	NE
St. Scholastica Monastery	Chicago	IL	St. Gregory Abbey	Shawnee	OK
Benedictine Monastery Perpetual Adoration	Clyde	MO	Santa Rita Abbey	Sonoita	AZ
St. John's Abbey	Collegetown	MN	St. Joseph's Abbey	Spencer	MA
Benet Hill Monastery	Colorado Springs	CO	St. Joseph Abbey	St. Benedict	LA
Conception Abbey	Conception	MO	St. Benedict's Monastery	St. Joseph	MN
Monastery of St. Gertrude	Cottonwood	ID	St. Bridgid of Kildare Monastery	St. Joseph	MN
Mt St Benedict Monastery	Crookston	MN	Holy Name Monastery	St. Leo	FL
Our Lady of the Angels Monastery	Crozet	VA	St. Louis Abbey	St. Louis	MO
Sacred Heart Monastery	Cullman	AL	St. Paul's Monastery	St. Paul	MN
Sacred Heart Monastery	Dickinson	ND	Abbey of Gethsemani	Trappist	KY
Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey	Dubuque	IA	St. Joseph's Monastery	Tulsa	OK
St. Scholastica Monastery	Duluth	MN	St. Walburg Monastery	Villa Hills	KY
St. Walburga Monastery	Elizabeth	NJ	Our Lady of New Clairvaux Abbey	Vina	CA
Mt. Michael Abbey	Elkhorn	NE	Queen of Heaven Monastery	Warren	OH
Casa Mision "San Benito"	Emporia	KS	St. Anselm's Abbey	Washington	DC
Mount St. Benedict Monastery	Erie	PA	Mother of God Monastery	Watertown	SD
Monastery Immaculate Conception	Ferdinand	IN	Monastery of the Glorious Cross	West Hartford	CT
St. Scholastica Monastery	Fort Smith	AR	Weston Priory	Weston	VT
St. Lucy's Priory	Glendora	CA	Redwoods Monastery	Whitethorn	CA
St. Emma Monastery	Greensburg	PA	Transfiguration Monastery	Windsor	NY
Our Lady of Clear Creek Abbey	Hulbert	OK	St. Benedict's Monastery	Winnipeg	MB
Cisterian Abbey Our Lady of Dallas	Irving	TX	Holy Cross Monaster	Woodville	TX
Holy Angels Convent	Jonesboro	AR	Mt. St. Mary's Abbey	Wrentham	MA
The Monastery of Thien Tam	Kerens	TX	Sacred Heart Monastery	Yankton	SD
St. Martin's Abbey	Lacey	WA			
St. Vincent Archabbey	Latrobe	PA			
Sacred Heart Monastery	Lisle	IL			
St. Joseph Monastery	Lucerne	CA			
Emmanuel Monastery	Lutherville	MD			
St. Anselm Abbey	Manchester	NH			
Mt Tabor Benedictines	Martin	KY			
Holy Wisdom Monastery	Middleton	WI			
Westminster Abbey	Mission	BC			
Mepkin Abbey	Moncks Corner	SC			
St. Mary's Abbey	Morristown	NJ			
Queen of Angels Monastery	Mount Angel	OR			
St. Peter's Abbey	Muenster	SK			
House of Bread Monastery	Nanaimo	BC			
St. Gertrude Monastery	Newark	DE			

### Staff Contacts

#### Executive Director:

**Sister Ann Hoffman, OSB**, [director@aim-usa.org](mailto:director@aim-usa.org)

#### Missionary Cooperative Coordinator/Office Manager:

**Sister Christine Kosin, OSB**, [aim@aim-usa.org](mailto:aim@aim-usa.org)

#### Cultural Services Staff:

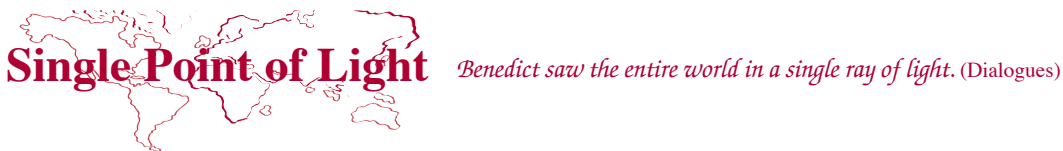
**Debbie Tincer**, [missionary@aim-usa.org](mailto:missionary@aim-usa.org)

**AIM USA Phone: 814-453-4724**

**Website: [www.aim-usa.org](http://www.aim-usa.org)**



Non-Profit  
Organization  
US Postage  
PAID  
Erie, PA  
Permit No. 888



## Let There Be Peace!

A common slogan during the Vietnam War of the 1970's was "Wage Peace, not War!" My friends and I chanted these words as we watched demonstrations on TV. My young, ideal self thought war could be brought to an end that easily.

Now the world is in the middle of the war in Ukraine. Images of death and destruction are vividly alive in our living rooms. Innocent people are forced to flee their homes, leaving EVERYTHING behind. And, most tragically, so many innocent lives are lost. Will it never end? Can we never learn?

Sadly, Ukraine is not the only place of violence, of war.

- Over one-half million people have died in Ethiopia due to a 16-month on-going civil war.
- Nigeria faces fear, hopelessness and insecurity as violent groups attack, kill and kidnap.
- An Ecuadoran city of 190,000 recorded over 131 violent deaths in the first four months of 2022.
- There have been 212 "mass shootings" in the USA in 2022.
- There is great risk of famine throughout much of the world due to the war in Ukraine.

But there is hope!

The world rallies. Benedictine monasteries in Ukraine and Poland open their hearts, arms, and homes to comfort those fleeing. You give life, sustenance and hope to those in need. The Sisters and Brothers in Ukraine are grateful, the refugees are grateful, we at AIM USA are grateful.

The world unites. Leaders of the world work together. There is a global outpouring of care, concern, humanitarian aid. The world **IS** filled with good people. Let us now unite to change what causes war, poverty, famine throughout the world. We are one family.

Let us all choose to do at least one small act of peace-making every day.

*Sister Ann Hoffman, OSB*

Sister Ann Hoffman, OSB, Executive Director, AIM USA  
[director@aim-usa.org](mailto:director@aim-usa.org)