Monastic Foundation in Zambia.

The Benedictine Abbey in Saint Lucia has accepted the divine inspiration to implant a new Monastery in the African Nation of Zambia.

The call ... came through a sign from on high...

Currently auxiliary Bishop of Chipata, a priest, Father Benjamin Phiri, who was Rector of the Major National Theological Seminary in Lusaka, while doing his doctorate in canon law at Urbaniana University in Rome, brought to his teacher, Monsignor Pio Vito Pinto, the wish of the Archbishop Mazombwe, who was at that time the Pastor of the capital city of Lusaka, to have in Zambia a monastic foundation of Benedictine contemplative Nuns.

The Archbishop Mazombwe had been Bishop of the Diocese of Chipata where he had built the Minor Seminary and given to it the Benedictine motto: “Ora et Labora” (pray & work). Who can denies the providential design?

God has really blessed this plan with the group of the first Zambian pioneers; seven of them are solemn professed, namely Sister Benedicta Chanda OSB, Sister Stefania Banda OSB and Sister Mary Lourdes Mukosa OSB, Sister Giovanna Battista Mabunda OSB, Sister Mary Elizabeth Mahashi OSB, Sister Mercy Masaka OSB and Sister Mary Assunta Mumba OSB. Meanwhile the Noviciate is open for new vocations.

The Community has then started this long human procedure of monastic formation in view to be found worthy by the divine Providence to accomplish this exodus from Saint Lucia to Chipata in Zambia.

These, in the same stable way of Benedictine community life, will produce, if God spares, the same spiritual and social fruits although in a different territorial context. Because the heart of all things in a Benedictine Monastery is the primacy of God.

The Nuns, faithfully to the charisma of the ancient Order of St. Benedict, will live there Ora et Labora - Pray and Work and try, together with the daily chant of the liturgy, to interpret humbly but firmly the urgent needs, spiritual and social, of the people around, in full communion with the Bishop and Pastor of the diocesan community.

The Bishop Lungu and the Abbess Marianna Pinto at the blessing of the foundation stone of the monastery.

Every birth in a family is a moment of joy. It goes without exaggeration that a new worker in the Lord’s vineyard is not just a welcome development but also an offer of relief to those already labouring. Such was the exhortation by key speakers at the ceremonial liturgy at Msupadzi, on Sunday 6th December 2009 celebrated to bless the foundation stone of the monastery of the Sisters of the order of St. Benedict.

This Order has come to open a house in Msupadzi, under the auspices of the diocese of Chipata. These nuns dedicate their entire lives to praying behind the walls of their house, rarely, I mean ‘rarely’ coming out. They also come to Chipata with a social development
agenda as they will be engaged in agriculture, health and social work and training. These programs are expected to greatly benefit the youths and the community of Msupadzi, as they will access training and actual services in the said programs. On the spiritual side, the Benedictine nuns will offer the much needed support in the prayer battle fields against devil and his Satanist who have brought disturbance, fear and are destroying lives of many in our communities, exhorted his Lordship the Bishop in his homily.

Speaking at the same occasion the Mother Abbess Marianna Pinto gave thanks to God for bringing her Order to Chipata, saying they had initially planned to build in Lusaka Archdiocese but God wanted them at Msupadzi, Chipata. In another speech Msgr. Pinto, who is the young bother of Mother Marianna Pinto, asked the community for unity, saying the nuns of St. Benedict promote unity and thus emphasized that the monastery was not a preserve of Catholics but a gift to all people of God who seek him in truth as is practiced in St. Lucia where they have the Abbey, different Christian denominations gather and pray together.