



"Ut In Omnibus Glorificetur Deus."  
"That in all things may God be glorified."  
(1 Peter 4:11)

# St. Peter's Abbey Newsletter

Vol. 41

2019-2020



"Ora et Labora"  
"Prayer and Work"  
(Benedictine Motto)

## Peter Novecosky re-elected abbot

Abbot Peter Novecosky was re-elected as abbot of St. Peter's Abbey on Oct. 27. The election was first scheduled for May 18 but was postponed because of travel restrictions for Abbot John Klassen of Collegeville, Minn., president of the American Cassinese Congregation to which St. Peter's belongs.

In anticipation of his 75th birthday at the end of April, Abbot Peter had submitted his resignation as leader of St. Peter's Abbey in January, in accordance with the regulations of the American-Cassinese Congregation.

With travel restrictions between the United States and Canada continually

being extended because of the Covid-19 pandemic, Abbot John suggested holding the abbatial election by Zoom. This was a first for the congregation, but perhaps a sign of things to come. Archbishop Don Bolen or Regina, an Oblate of St. Peter's

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Abbot Peter was elected abbot Oct. 27. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the abbatial election was conducted via Zoom technology — a first. Abbot John Klassen, on the computer, was assisted by Archbishop Don Bolen of Regina, Fr. Daniel Muyres, secretary, and Prior Basil Schaan and Subprior Benedict van Ginkel, tellers.



# Abbey's Saskatchewan legacy began in 1903

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Abbey, agreed to be the on-site moderator for the election. He presided at the morning Mass Oct. 27 in honour of the Holy Spirit.

The community had chosen Fr. Daniel Muyres to be secretary for the election committee. He was assisted during the election by Brs. Basil Schaan, prior, and Benedict van Ginkel, subprior. All monks in solemn vows were eligible to vote. The day ended with an evening social. A blessing ceremony for Abbot Peter by Bishop Mark Hagemoen of Saskatoon will be held at a date to be determined, depending on Covid-19 and weather conditions.

Abbot Peter was born in Burr, Sask. The youngest of eight children. He attended Willow Ridge, a one-room school, for his elementary education. He took his high school at St. Peter's College and his philosophy and theology studies at St. John's Abbey in Minnesota. He was ordained, along with two classmates, in 1970.

After ordination, he taught for two years at St. Peter's, until the high school closed in 1972. He was assistant pastor in Humboldt for five years and was involved with St. Peter's Press and the Prairie Messenger for many years. He also served as guest master and formation director for the community.

Abbots are elected for life, according to the Rule of St. Benedict. This was the custom until the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. Then, new monastic constitutions were drawn up which mandated abbots of our congregation to resign at age 65. This has now been changed to resign at age 75.



*Abbot Peter attended the Western bishops retreat Jan. 6-10 at Westminster Abbey in Mission, B.C.*

Our first leader, Abbot Bruno Doerfler, died in office at age 52 in 1919. Our second leader, Abbot Michael Ott, resigned in 1926 after six years in office and died at 1948 at the age of 77. Abbot Severin Gertkin died in 1960 at the age of 78 after serving 34 years in office. Abbot Jerome Weber resigned in 1990 at age 75 after serving 30 years as abbot and he died in 2008 at the age of 92. Abbot Peter was elected in 1990 to replace Abbot Jerome.

At the time of Abbot Peter's election in 1990, St. Peter's was a territorial abbey (called an *abbey nullius*), meaning the abbot was in charge of the 20 parishes within St. Peter's Abbacy. The abbacy was first set up in 1921, carved out of the Prince Albert Diocese. This was changed in 1998 when the abbacy was joined to the Saskatoon Diocese. Until that time, the pastors of the abbacy parishes were all Benedictine monks. All of the parish-

es now, except Muenster, have diocesan priests as pastors.

St. Peter's Abbey traces its history back to a small monastery founded by St. Vincent's Archabbey in 1892 near Wetaug, southern Illinois, with Prior Oswald Moosmueller as leader. These monks, along with monks from St. John's Abbey in Minnesota, answered the call to found a new monastery in Western Canada in 1903. Immigrants were pouring into Western Canada at that time. Many were German Catholics from Minnesota, who pleaded for Benedictine monks to accompany them as pastors.

Over the years, the abbey provided pastors for abbacy parishes, established a college, operated a farm, published a weekly Catholic newspaper, sent missionaries to Brazil, and opened a guest house. In the 1960s the abbey membership reached a high of 65 monks.



# Fr. Paul stricken by Lou Gehrig's Disease

Fr. Paul Paproski was informed Nov. 27, 2019 why he was limping with his left leg since April. It was the onset of Lou Gehrig's Disease.



*During his pilgrimage to St. Joseph's Oratory the week of Feb. 3, Fr. Paul visited the tomb of St. André Bessette, a miracle worker during his lifetime. Fr. Paul was accompanied by Jackie Saretsky, diocesan hospital chaplain. They are shown in the crypt church, offering lots of petitions for people who requested prayers.*

Fr. Paul was pastor of St. Peter's Parish in Muenster for five years when the sudden and unexpected news hit him, his parishioners and the monks. There had been no indications or hints of this new event in Fr. Paul's life.

In June he had accompanied Abbot Peter to St. Anselm's Abbey in Manchester, NH, as a delegate of St. Peter's to the congregation's general chapter (see 2019 newsletter).

He continued with his regular schedule at the abbey and parish. This included editing last year's abbey newsletter and celebrating the daily and Sunday Masses in Muenster.

The doctor gave her diagnosis in

November, and this was confirmed by a second opinion. As the disease progressed further in his body, Fr. Paul began using a walker in January, 2020 to maintain his balance.

On March 15 he celebrated his last Mass at St. Peter's Cathedral in Muenster. After the Covid-19 shutdown of church services ceased, Fr. Demetrius replaced him as pastor and Fr. Paul continues to accompany him, in a wheelchair. His parishioners are always happy to see him, even in a different capacity.

His retirement from the parish was celebrated at the abbey on July 12, with

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*On Aug. 12 Fr. Paul Paproski was joined by family and friends to celebrate the 14th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. He was joined by his parents Ardel and Freda Paproski of Hudson Bay, Sask.*



# Abbey grateful for assistance from province

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a small get-together of monks and parishioners. On Aug. 12 another small gathering at the abbey celebrated the 14th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

By the end of the summer Fr. Paul was joining the monks at prayer and meals in a wheelchair.

Provincial organizations like SaskAbility and the ALS Society have been very helpful in making life more manageable for Fr. Paul. They provide many aids to make it easier to care for Fr. Paul at home

Fr. Demetrius has taken on main responsibility for the care of Fr. Paul at the abbey. He is assisted by other monks and home-care personnel from the area. The abbey is very grateful for all the support available at this time of need.



*The Abbey acquired a wheelchair-accessible van in October. It makes it easier for Fr. Paul to visit parishioners and attend meetings. Fr. Demetrius is assisting him into the van for his upcoming trip.*



*Fr. Paul's Lou Gehrig's Disease progressed to the point in August that he needed help to be fed. Here his mother, Freda, feeds him at supper.*



*Fr. Paul uses a scooter to visit his nephew, Joel Dyck.*



# Events around the Abbey: 2019-2020

2019

July 16 — David and Maria Nguyen arrived in Canada from Vietnam with their family. David is hired to be a cook in the abbey kitchen.

Sept. 1 — Fr. Lawrence DeMong becomes pastor of Holdfast, Dilke and Craik parishes in the Regina Archdiocese.

Sept. 17 — Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB gave a PowerPoint presentation to 35 students and staff of St. Peter's College. The presentation covered the history of the college, St. Peter's Colony and Benedictines.

Sept. 20 — Family and friends congratulated Fr. Joseph Ackerman, OSB on his 95th birthday. Fr. Joseph was recovering at St. Peter's Abbey after a few weeks' stay in the Humboldt hospital.

Sept. 21 — More than \$80,000 in scholarships and bursaries were presented at the 2019 St. Peter's College Awards Day Ceremony. The majority of the scholarship and bursary recipients and their families were in attendance. Abbot Peter welcomed everyone on behalf of the monastic community.



*David and Maria Nguyen, and their children, Theo and Mary, arrived at the abbey July 18. David was a chef in Hanoi, Vietnam. He is the brother of Father Thuy, in white shirt, of the archdiocese of Regina.*

Sept. 23-27 — Abbot Peter attended the annual meeting of the Canadian bishops in Cornwall, Ont. He is secretary for the Western bishops

Sept. 27-30 — Abbot Peter attended the ATRI meeting in Calgary, an annual gathering of religious superiors and treasurers. There were 180 at the meeting

from across Canada.

Sept. 30 — Farmers woke up to wet snow. The drop in temperature put a damper on the harvest.

Oct. 2 — St. Peter's College hosted its annual Opportunities Edge Career Fair where displays are held advertising careers for high school students. Approximately 400 high school students viewed 35 exhibits and presentations at the 2019 fair.

Oct. 3 — Fifteen altar servers of St. Peter's Parish gathered for pizza at St. Peter's College. The annual event is held at the beginning of the school year to thank the servers for their good work. Fr. Paul led the blessing.

Oct. 7 — Lydia Mai and her husband, Vincent, and two children join Abbot Peter and Joseph for their first supper at St. Peter's. Lydia will be working in the Abbey business office.

Oct. 16 — Fr. Cosmas leaves to become chaplain for Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Nova Scotia for a group of Augustinian contemplative nuns.



*Fr. Cosmas Epifano, right, left St. Peter's Abbey Oct. 16 to become chaplain for Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Nova Scotia for a group of Augustinian contemplative nuns. He will live in a hermitage on their grounds. He is shown with Br. Basil.*

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# People and events around the abbey

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Oct. 18-20 — Fr. Demetrius and Fr. Paul were among the presenters at a weekend Engagement Encounter held at St. Peter's Abbey. Two married couples assisted with presentations.

Oct. 20 — Fr. Lawrence DeMong, Fr. Daniel Muyres, and Br. Basil Schaan attended a Development and Peace meeting in Bruno.

Oct. 21 — Canadians went to the polls in the 2019 federal election and brought the Liberals back to power with a minority government. All the seats in Saskatchewan went to the Progressive Conservative Party.

Oct. 22 — Br. Basil Schaan took Fr. Joseph Ackerman to his previous residence in Bruno.

Oct. 22 — Fr. Demetrius gave a presentation, *Signs and Symbols of Halloween*, to students and staff of St. Peter's College. Campus Ministry sponsored the event.

Oct. 26 — Oblate Edgar Neudorf of Saskatoon gave a presentation on Hildegard of Bingen during Oblate Day.

Oct. 26 — The first snowfall covered the ground. Temperatures fell below 0 C to ensure that the snow would remain.

Nov. 3 — Fr. Paul served as the chaplain at a 4th Degree Exemplification in Humboldt where 11 members of the Knights of Columbus joined the 4th Degree.

Nov. 9 — Abbot Peter and Fr. Daniel attended the 100-year celebration of the former convent of the Ursulines of Bruno. Bishop Mark Hagemoen was the celebrant for the Mass. The convent, which opened in 1919, is now the home to the St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission which began in 2007.

Nov. 10 — Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR, of the Eparchy of Saskatoon was appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Eparchy of Toronto. Bishop Bryan has given presentations to the students and staff of St. Peter's College through St. Peter's College Campus Ministry.

Nov. 12 — Fr. Paul attended the Honor A Veteran Night in Watson, sponsored by the 4th Degree Knights of Columbus. Three veterans in the 90s were honored for their service in the Second World War.

Nov. 16 — Abbot Peter and Fr. Paul attended the 50th Anniversary Gala of the Saskatchewan Knights of Columbus in Humboldt. The guest speaker for the evening was Archbishop Murray Chatlain of Keewatin Le Pas Archdiocese. A Memorial Mass was held, previous to the celebration, at St. Peter's Parish, Muenster.

Nov. 27 — Fr. Paul Paproski was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's Disease. He is starting to use a walker to attend the daily monastic schedule.

Dec. 1 — St. Peter's Chorus presented an Advent concert at St. Augustine Parish, Humboldt. The Saskatoon Men's Chorus, made a guest appearance, and presented some hymns.

Dec. 5 — A new SaskTel telephone system was installed in the abbey.

## 2020

Jan. 6-10 — Abbot Peter attended a Western Bishops retreat at New Westminster Abbey at Mission, B.C.

Jan. 15 — Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB celebrated funeral Mass at St. Benedict Church for his brother Raymond, 86, who died Jan. 12.

Feb. 17 — Former novice Edmundo Cruz flew to Big Sur, California to experience life as a Camaldolese monk.

Feb. 18-21 — Abbot Peter flew to Victoria to be secretary at the annual meeting of the Assembly of Western Catholic Bishops.

Feb. 25 — The annual Medieval Feast, involving students, monks and writer guests, signaled the beginning of Lent the next day.

Feb. 14 — Fr. Richard Meidl went to the Saskatoon City Hospital for surgery on his right knee.



*Lydia Mai and her husband, Vincent, and two children, Lan and Chi, welcome the monks and abbey staff to a housewarming in the newly renovated press building Dec. 21. This area used to be the front desk and editors' area for the Prairie Messenger and St. Peter's press.*





*Br. Anthony and Abbot Peter attended the Jan. 26 Vietnamese New Year's celebration in Saskatoon. A Mass was followed by a festive supper and New Year's celebrations.*



*Fr. Richard Meidl completed pastoral work and returned to the abbey from Watrous on Aug. 1. He takes over as treasurer of St. Peter's Abbey.*

March 7-14 — Abbot Peter, along with three other American Benedictine monks, went to St. John's Abbey to conduct a Visitation of the community.

March 30 — A planned Visitation of St. Peter's Abbey this week was cancelled due to travel restrictions from the United States because of Covid-19. Covid-19 is also forcing all meetings away from the abbey to be conducted by Zoom.

May 6 — A community meeting was held to discuss the requirements for joining *Praesidium*. It accredits religious communities with guidelines for building a safe living environment.

June 3 — Br. Anthony Nguyen had his toes amputated at St. Paul's Hospital, Saskatoon, because of complication from diabetes.

June 22 — Miners Construction had a crew living in Severin Hall for the next



*Fr. Daniel Muyres retired as chaplain of Humboldt Hospital March 1, after serving 17 years.*

two months while they renovated the Sportsplex roof.

July 3 — Robert Janiga returns to the abbey to re-assume his novitiate. He had spent several months at Fort Good Hope, NWT to explore life in the North.

July 6-9 — The community participated in a Zoom retreat led. By Fr. Ron Rolheiser. This was a first. The retreat scheduled for June 15-18 was cancelled due to the Covid-19 epidemic.

July 19 — The annual Mt. Carmel Pilgrimage was cancelled due to Covid-19 regulations.

July 27-29 — A meeting of Benedictine abbots and delegates in Kansas was cancelled due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. All meetings at this time have been by Zoom.

Aug. 2 — Fr. Demetrius Wasylyniuk replaces Fr. Paul Paproski as pastor of Muenster. He had been helping Fr. Paul for several weeks already.

August — On the farm, hopper bottoms were put on five grain storage bins and the entrance road to the former Leo Torborg farm was torn up.

Aug. 24 — Kyle Hepburn of Oshawa spent two weeks at the abbey as a Live-in.

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*Br. Basil and Richard Hamilton install one of six stained-glass windows outside the library hallway in March. The windows honour six prominent Benedictine saints who fostered education. The windows were sponsored by Werner and Helga Höing of Vancouver.*



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Aug. 31 — Resident students for St. Peter's College begin arriving. The College has permission to provide face-to-face classes.

Sept. 4 — Br. Kurt Van Kuren begins his 30th year of teaching psychology. Nineteen students are taking his live class on biological basis of behaviour, including two remote students via Internet.

Oct. 3 — Joseph Do passes his English test in Edmonton. This qualifies him to seek a job as cook at the abbey.

Oct. 17 — A dozen Oblates attended Oblate day at the abbey. We gathered for Mass and dinner, but there was no afternoon program.

Oct. 19 — Fr. Demetrius drove to Moose Jaw to pick up a wheelchair van for abbey use.



*Abbey guest Joseph Do checks the weather and makes a report twice a day. This continues a tradition of almost 120 years at St. Peter's Abbey.*

Oct. 26 — A provincial election in Saskatchewan resulted in a return to power of the Sask. Party for a fourth term.

Oct. 26-29 — Five priests from the Kerrobert deanery made their retreat

at the abbey.

Oct. 27 — Abbot John of St. John's Abbey conducted an abbatial election at St. Peter's via Zoom. This was a first for our congregation, and maybe a sign of things to come.



*Robert Janiga was invested as a novice of St. Peter's Abbey on July 11. He was given the name Br. Denys and will make a year-long novitiate. July 11 is the feast day of Saint Benedict, the patriarch of Western Europe.*



*Renovations began June 22 to the St. Peter's College gym and arena roof. A new cover was put on the flat roof and a hip roof was added to the arena dressing room area.*



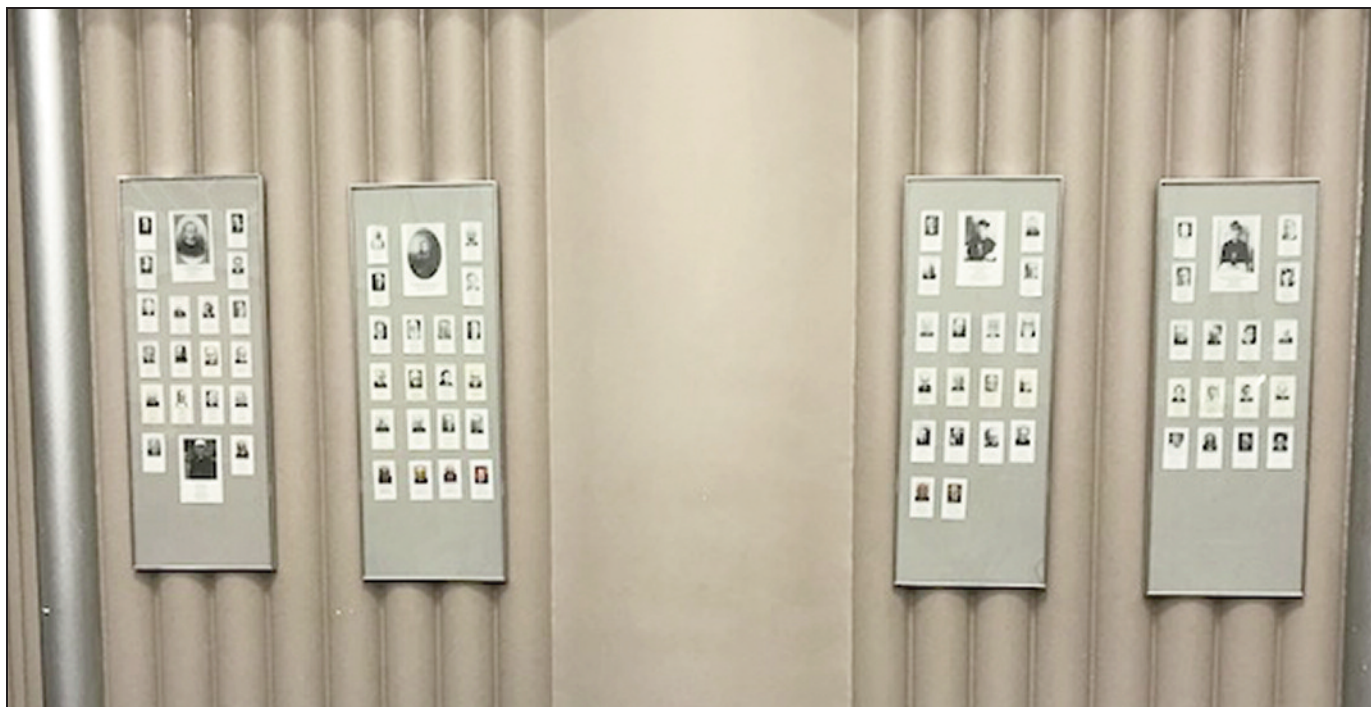


*Joseph Do made a Thanksgiving display outside the abbey church.*



*The weekend of Nov. 8 saw the first major snowstorm of this winter, with up to a foot of snow in some parts of Saskatchewan. Br. Basil luckily had the snowplow ready to clear away the snow.*





November is a special month to pray for the deceased. Pictures of our deceased confreres are displayed in our abbey church this month.



During the month of November, the Village of Muenster honoured veterans who served in WW I and WW II. Among them were three Benedictine monks: Fr. Cosmas Krumpelmann, who served in World War I; Fr. Al Herriges, who served as a Chaplain in World War II; and Fr. Joe Ackerman, who also served in World War II. The banners are hanging around the village.



# People and events around the abbey



*Dayo Oyinseye, a former SPC student, spent the summer at the abbey as a volunteer due to the Covid-19 pandemic.*



*Live-in Kyle Hepburn of Oshawa, Ont., trims a caragana hedge during his August visit.*



*Fr. Joe Ackerman celebrated his 96th birthday at the Abbey on Sept. 20. He is the oldest monk of St. Peter's Abbey. He currently lives in retirement in Bruno, where he served 19 years as pastor.*

## Donations and Bequests

We seek to provide prophetic witness through a monastic lifestyle of prayer and work that gives priority to the praise of God. We embrace service to God's People through hospitality to guests, involvement in parish ministry, education and sustainable agriculture.

Please remember the monks of St. Peter's Abbey when considering making donations to charities or bequests.

Donations will help, in particular, towards helping us finance needed improvements to our infrastructure, promoting vocations and providing for the needs of our elderly.

Donations can be sent to: St. Peter's Abbey, Box 10, Muenster, SK, S0K-2Y0.

Tax receipts will be issued for donations.

For credit card donations please visit either:

[canadahelps.org](http://canadahelps.org) and search Order of St. Benedict

Or [www.stpetersabbey.ca](http://www.stpetersabbey.ca) and click on the Donate Now button on the right hand side of the page.

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Articles and Photographs by:  
Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB

