

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

# St. Peter's Abbey Newsletter

Vol. 37 No. 1 Spring and Summer 2016



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

## Beekeeping is a tradition of St. Peter's Abbey

St. Peter's Abbey is known for its history of education, farming, gardening and of course, Benedictine monks and priests. A lesser known part of the abbey's past is its apiary which has been a part of the Benedictine monastery for 70 years.

"Honeybees and monasteries seem to have a long and complimentary history," noted Fr. Demetrius Wasylyniuk, OSB, abbey beekeeper. "I corresponded with several monastic beekeepers in North America and in Europe and found that some abbeys have had honeybees for as long as three centuries," he said.

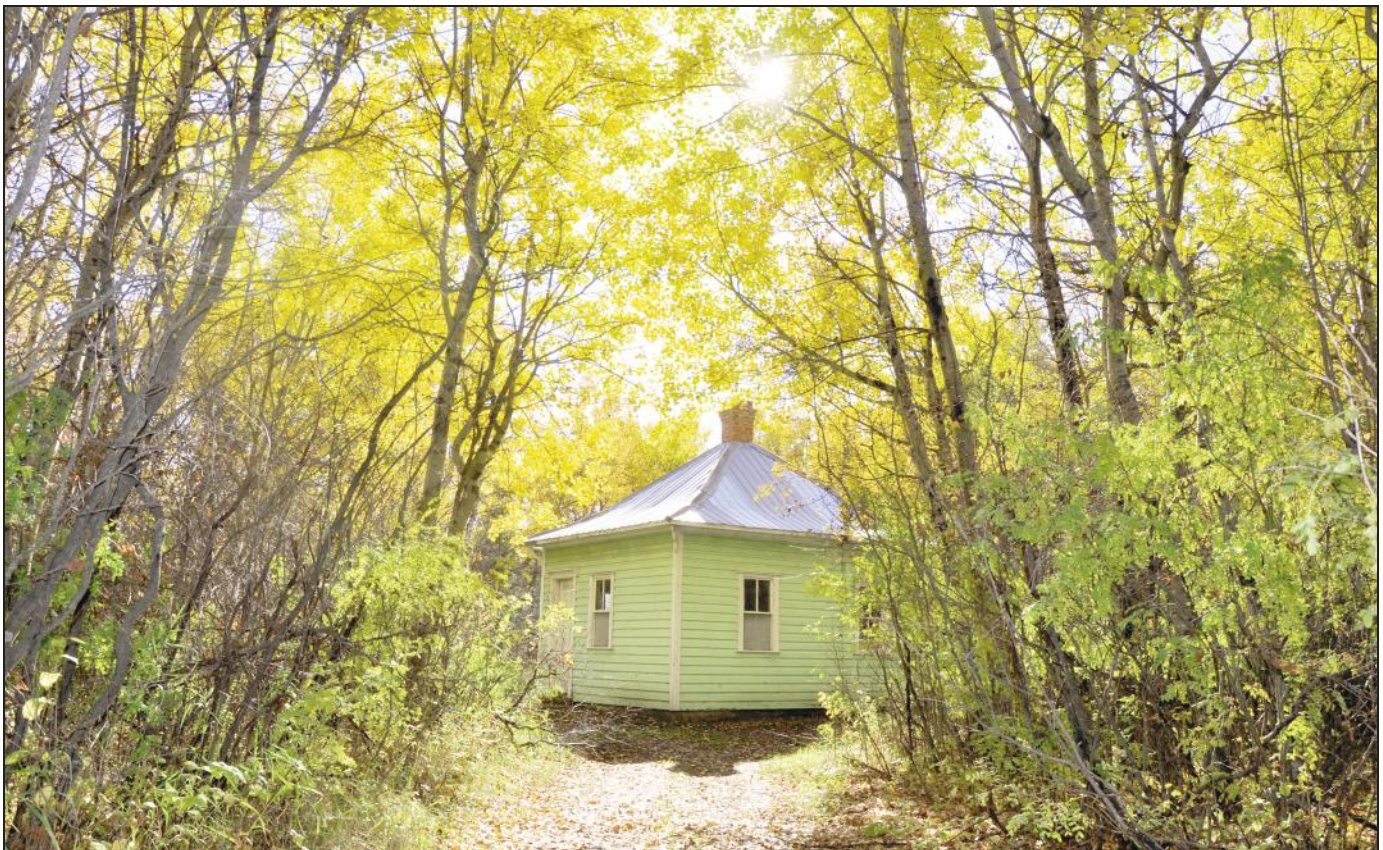
The beginning of honey production at St. Peter's Abbey can be traced to 1946 when Br. Anthony (Tony) Benning, OSB caught a swarm of bees. He acquired a bee box (hive) with a honeycomb frame inside in which bees could store honey. Br. Tony built a honey-house that he used for the extraction of honey and storage of hives and equipment. His successor and brother, Fr. Xavier Benning, OSB taught beekeeping to other Benedictines, including Fr. Demetrius. Other beekeepers who assisted Fr. Xavier were: Brs. Oswald King, John

Brodner and Wolfgang Thiem. Fr. Demetrius assumed the role of beekeeper assistant in 1989 when Br. Wolfgang was assigned the full-time job of helping build the abbey church.

Fr. Xavier was a Benedictine with many talents and one was teaching Latin, Fr. Demetrius remembers. While teaching the art of beekeeping to Fr. Demetrius, Fr. Xavier doubled as a Latin teacher.

"I needed to learn Latin in the seminary and Fr. Xavier, who taught Latin,

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**HONEY-HOUSE** – The "honey-house" of St. Peter's Abbey appears to be giving off light as the leaves change colour and the sun lowers in the autumn. The honey-house is used to separate the honey from the honeycomb. The honey is produced by Italian domesticated honey bees.

# A message from Abbot Peter's desk

Dear friends,

I am writing this article from Rome. I am here for the Benedictine Abbots Congress, which meets every four years. This is the seventh congress I've attended since 1992.

Our abbey newsletter focuses on events at our abbey. It recalls some of the major happenings of the past year.

It's not that often that we focus on the wider Benedictine world that our abbey is associated with. For example, there are three Benedictine abbeys in Canada; one in British Columbia, one in Quebec and ours in Saskatchewan.

While each abbey in the world is independent and autonomous, we are also associated with a larger group of abbeys called a congregation. St. Peter's Abbey is a member of the American Cassinese Congregation. We were founded 113 years ago from St. John's Abbey in Minnesota, as well as from St. Vincent Archabbey in Pennsylvania. There are 21 abbeys in our congregation.

There is another congregation in North America, called the Swiss American Congregation. It has 13 abbeys as members, and it includes the Abbey of New Westminster in Mission, B.C. In addition there are about 20 other Benedictine congregations around the world. This all adds up to approximately 7,000 Benedictine men; in addition there are about 14,000 Benedictine women worldwide. We are the oldest monastic community in the world.

While Benedictine abbeys started in

Italy, where St. Benedict was born in 480, monasteries soon spread across Europe. In fact, abbeys were so important in European history that the sixth to twelfth centuries are called the Benedictine Centuries. Abbeys were the centres of learning, of culture, of agriculture, of civilization and of hospitality.

In the 19th century, Benedictines spread to North America, along with the European settlers. Most monasteries established schools and colleges and also did pastoral work. Today, Benedictine abbeys are spreading into Africa and Asia. This is where the new growth is.

Every four years all the abbots worldwide are called to meet as a congress at our Benedictine abbey in Rome, Sant Anselmo. This September about 250 abbots are here. It is a meeting of what is called the Benedictine confederation.

I came a few days earlier, in order to take part in the Canonization Mass for Mother Teresa. It was a sweltering day under the hot sun, but it was a very historic day. She was famous worldwide.

At the two-week congress this year, the main focus of the first week was to elect a new abbot primate, who is considered our head and spokesperson here in Rome. Abbot Notker Wolf has served as abbot primate for 16 years. He oversaw a lot of renovations to our abbey of Sant Anselmo here and traveled to many monasteries worldwide.

After several sessions discussing the role and mission of the new abbot primate, we chose Abbot Gregory Polan of Conception Abbey, Missouri as new abbot primate on Sept. 10. Other areas of discussion included the university of Sant Anselmo and how to improve it; our collaboration with our sister organization, the *Communio* of International Benedictine Sisters (CIB); our outreach to newly established monasteries in Asia and Africa; Aid to International Monasteries (AIM); our on-going interfaith dialogue with Moslem monks; and various work-



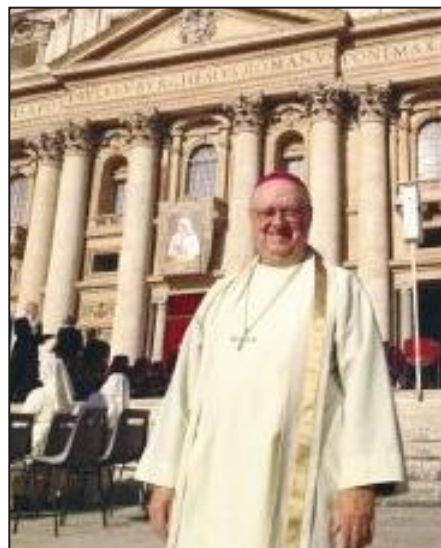
*CANADIAN ABBOTS – The three Canadian abbots attending the Abbots Congress in Rome, Sept. 5-19, were: from left, Andre Laberge of St-Benoît-du-Lac in Quebec; John Braganza of Westminster Abbey, Mission, B.C., and Peter Novecosky of St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster.*

shops ranging from our response to climate change to prayerful meditation.

One of the highlights of this year's congress was an audience with Pope Francis on Sept. 8. After a brief address to us in Italian, he shook the hand of everyone present. Some of the most fruitful and rewarding parts of any congress are the friendships renewed and new ones made with monks from other parts of the world. I'm sure it's a dream that St. Benedict never envisioned in his lifetime.



*AUDIENCE WITH POPE – Abbot Peter shakes the hand of Pope Francis, Sept. 8, at the Vatican during an audience with the pope.*



*CANONIZATION – Abbot Peter attended the Canonization Mass of Mother Teresa, Sept. 4, at the Vatican.*

# Fr. Rudolph serves many roles as Benedictine

When Fr. Rudolph Novecosky, OSB celebrated his first Mass at his home parish of St. Scholastica, Burr on June 10, 1962 he asked everyone to pray for him as he began his priesthood. The prayers of his family, friends and parishioners have sustained him during the past 54 years in his vocation as a priest and 60 years as a Benedictine monk of St. Peter's Abbey.

Appreciation for his service as a pastor was shown at Fr. Rudolph's 50th anniversary celebration, June 3, 2012, at his former parish of St. Ann's in Annaheim. More than 275 people gathered for Mass and a program. A family gathering was held at St. Peter's Abbey later that day. In the summer of 2016, Fr. Rudolph celebrated 60 years of monastic life at special gatherings in St. Peter's Abbey with the Benedictines and his family.

The importance of a faith life was taken for granted in Fr. Rudolph's family which centered its schedule around prayer and work on a mixed farm near Burr. Fr. Rudolph's parents, Joe and Anne, were active in St. Scholastica Church and the local Burr community. While living in Burr, Fr. Rudolph attended a one-room school, Willow Ridge, up to Grade 9 and then St. Peter's High School from Grades 10 to 12. He took one year of liberal arts at St. Peter's College, Muenster and then

decided to join the Benedictines at St. Peter's Abbey. Fr. Rudolph said he admired the monks and their dedication in their calling to God. He spent the next seven years at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, where he completed his novitiate and six years of seminary.

Reminiscing about his past it becomes obvious Fr. Rudolph has been very busy. He entered St. Peter's Abbey in 1955, two years before the abbey began a large building campaign. Fr. Rudolph said he learned a lot about construction.

While studying in the seminary he returned to St. Peter's Abbey during the summer where he helped with the abbey's mixed-grain farm and garden. "I did a lot of hoeing back then," he remembers.

Following ordination on June 9, 1962, Fr. Rudolph was appointed assistant pastor with Fr. John Hable of Assumption Parish, Marysburg, and St. Bernard and Holy Trinity at Pilger. He was appointed prefect (supervisor) of St. Peter's High School and college from 1963 until 1972 when the high school closed. Fr. Rudolph worked as a high school teacher, giving instruction in geometry, algebra, trigonometry, Latin, agriculture, geology and appreciation of English literature. He did not have a teaching diploma, only the text books to teach both him and the students all the necessary subject material. Having a love for sports, Fr. Rudolph served as sports director at St. Peter's High School where he coached hockey,



*ENJOYS RECREATION – Fr. Rudolph Novecosky, OSB enjoys taking part in recreation at the abbey during the evening. He is an expert at playing Crokinole.*

volleyball, basketball and track and field. Fr. Rudolph built the track used for track and field meets, the soccer field and the bleachers, east of the arena, in 1967 as part of the centennial project.

Parish work has always been a joy of Fr. Rudolph who, in 1972, began assisting Fr. Werner Renneberg, OSB in the parishes at St. Gregor and Muenster. In 1979, Fr. Rudolph was appointed pastor of St. Gregory Parish in St. Gregor and then St. Ann's Parish at Annaheim beginning August 23, 1987. He served as prior (second in command to the abbot) and sub-prior at St. Peter's Abbey, novice master and work coordinator for the novices and juniors. Between 1987 and 2008 he was the pastor for the two parishes at either Annaheim and St. Gregor, or Annaheim and Naicam, retiring in 2008 to St. Peter's Abbey. Since moving to the abbey Fr. Rudolph has served as prior, novice master/formation director and treasurer of St. Peter's Abbey. He was the Oblate director for one year.

Fr. Rudolph is known by his former parishioners as being supportive of community events. He was often present at community sports events, local celebrations, graduations and homecomings. His support of the community was acknowledged at his 50th anniversary celebration in Annaheim. Fr. Rudolph is known for his expertise in wine making,



*ANNIVERSARIES – Fr. Rudolph Novecosky, OSB and Fr. Daniel Muyres, OSB hold a cake commemorating the 60th year of monastic profession for Fr. Rudolph and 61st year for Fr. Daniel.*

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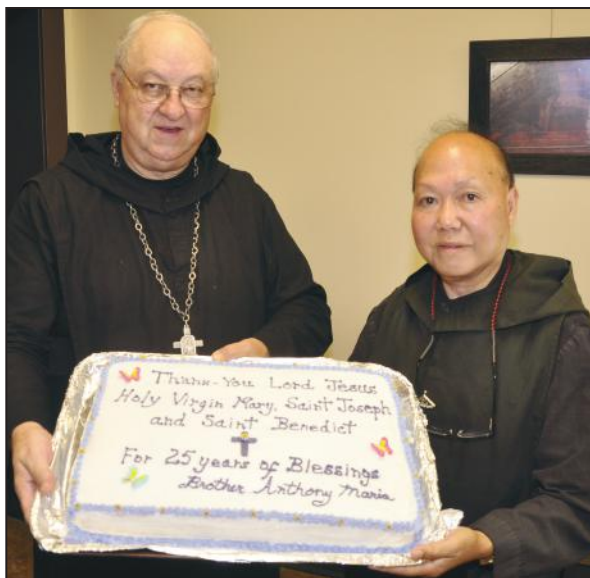
# Br. Anthony Nguyen celebrates 25 years of monastic life

"We've all heard the story of how Br. Anthony escaped many years ago from Vietnam. I'm sure he's often said, "Much obliged, Lord." He was especially thankful for the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Abbot Peter said, August 21, in his homily at the 25th anniversary Mass of Br. Anthony Nguyen, OSB. And he will thank her in song during the Preparation of the Gifts and at the end of Mass. It'll be his way of saying "Much obliged, Mary."

Br. Anthony sang, *Ave Maria*, during the Preparation of the Gifts. His relatives sang, *Ave Maria*, in Vietnamese at the conclusion of his anniversary Mass. There was visiting afterwards amongst the Benedictines and 70 guests of Br. Anthony, followed by a festive banquet. Abbot Peter was the homilist at the 25th anniversary Mass, August 28, for Br. Anthony at Holy Family Cathedral in Saskatoon. The celebrant was Fr. Joseph Phong Nguyen.

The history of Br. Anthony reads like a Hollywood script where a person is confronted with tragedy and near death and then rises to triumph over evil. Br. Anthony, 62, was born in Hanoi, Vietnam in 1954 to Joseph Dan Nguyen and Mary So. He was the youngest among his siblings of one brother and two sisters. His only surviving sibling, Theresa Huyen of Mississauga, Ontario was present for his celebration. Br. Anthony's father, Joseph, was a gifted carpenter who rose from poverty to become a successful carpentry instructor and furniture maker. His skills in carpentry were recognized by the royal establishment in Vietnam who employed him to make furniture for the royal family, Br. Anthony said. Joseph became the head of his own construction business which employed some of his former students. The Nguyen family was forced to flee to Saigon in 1954 after the Communists took over North Vietnam. Joseph eventually built a successful carpentry business there. Joseph and his wife Mary both died in Vietnam.

Education and the arts were important to the Nguyen family. Br. Anthony took piano lessons in high school and after graduating Grade 12 in 1973, he studied law for two years at Saigon University. The Communists took over South Vietnam in 1975 and forced Christians to



**25TH ANNIVERSARY** – Abbot Peter Novacosky, OSB and Br. Anthony Nguyen, OSB hold the 25th anniversary cake commemorating Br. Anthony's 25th year of monastic profession. A special celebration for Br. Anthony was held, Aug. 21, at St. Peter's Abbey.

leave university. Br. Anthony was later employed by the government as a film critic from 1977 to 1980, rating films made by the Vietnamese government.

Life in Vietnam was difficult for Christians who were held under suspicion by the Vietnamese government, Br. Anthony said. Travel was restricted for citizens who were required to have visas to go outside their communities. On July 19, 1980, Br. Anthony decided to leave Vietnam. Br. Anthony hid beneath a net of fish on a boat from 11 p.m. until 6 a.m. when they were out of view of the coast guard.

"We had to stay hidden until it was clear that we were free from surveillance. Afterwards they threw the fish overboard and we were able to sit in the boat and breathe freely. After three days and two nights on the ocean, we met about 70 or 80 pirates. We didn't have anything to eat or to drink," he said. "They took everything we had. Fortunately, they let us live. Rain came and we had some plastic sheets that were used to catch the rain so that we could drink. After the rain, we were able to use the plastic sheets to cover our bodies because the pirates had taken our shirts and all we had to wear was our pants."

The boat landed in Lemngop, Thailand at a refugee camp on July 26, 1980. The

camp was operated by the United Nations. The food supply was inadequate and many refugees went hungry. Water was supplied through a well and the water had to be boiled before it could be consumed. The Canadian embassy, on August 15, 1980, gave Br. Anthony permission to come to Canada. He was very happy because, he said, it was almost like going from purgatory to heaven. He flew to Montreal with nine people on December 8, 1980. Br. Anthony remained in Montreal for four days until the government decided to send him to Saskatoon after learning he had relatives there. Br. Anthony was required to

sign a form promising to reimburse the \$750 airline flights from Thailand to Saskatoon. It did not take him long to repay the travel costs. He found jobs at restaurants where he worked as a waiter and then at a post office where he was a janitor. On November 21, 1984 he became a Canadian citizen.

During late 1980s Br. Anthony discerned about joining a religious order. Saskatoon Bishop James Mahoney suggested he visit St. Peter's Abbey. Br. Anthony arrived there on September 29, 1989, becoming the first Oriental to try religious life at the abbey. He began his vocation working as a janitor, in the gardens, feeding chickens and taking care of the sick. He is presently the church organist, sacristan and looks after the mail room.

"I received grace from God because he helped me get through many difficulties in my life. The way I see things after 25 years makes me realize that many things are possible through God and without God's help I don't think I could have gotten through all the difficulties in my life. My advice to others is to follow Jesus and to put your trust in him. Put your trust in his mercy and pray to him and he will provide you with the guidance to take care of your life," Br. Anthony said.

# Fr. Xavier doubles as Latin teacher

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agreed to help. He would often ask me questions or throw a quiz on Latin grammar,” Fr. Demetrius remembers. “He was an excellent teacher who taught Latin in St. Peter’s High School. And he was a mentor as well,” he said. Fr. Xavier enjoyed sharing his knowledge of beekeeping along with his insight into monastic life. He was a gentle person who embraced the wisdom of the Rule of St. Benedict.

The management of the apiary was handed on to Fr. Demetrius in June of 1991 when Fr. Xavier died. Br. Kurt Van Kuren, OSB worked as his assistant for the next nine years. The honeybee colonies had from eight to 10 colonies (hives) which produced up to 900 lbs. of honey in one season. The honeybees gathered pollen and nectar from local flowers, alfalfa and apple blossoms. The honey is used in the monastic kitchen for cooking and baking. It is available in dining rooms for monks and guests.

Fr. Demetrius is the sole beekeeper,

today, and currently manages two colonies of Italian domesticated bees which produce about 280 pounds of honey each season. He enjoys showing

the apiary to visitors and he sometimes gives instruction in honey extraction. One of his students was Jeff Bergermann of Humboldt, great-nephew of Fr. Xavier.



**FAMILY TRADITION** – Fr. Demetrius Wasylyniuk, OSB explained honey extraction to Dale, left, and son Jeff Bergermann of Humboldt, right. Jeff is the great-nephew of the late Xavier Benning, OSB who taught beekeeping to Fr. Demetrius. They are standing in front of the 1946 Minneapolis Moline tractor that Fr. Xavier once operated.



**BOUNTIFUL HARVEST** – Fr. Demetrius Wasylyniuk, OSB, St. Peter’s Abbey beekeeper, displays some of the honey that was processed for the 2016 season. The harvest yielded 280 pounds of honey.

## Fr. Rudolph skilled wine maker

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especially chokecherry and saskatoon wine. His parishioners often supplied him with berries, he said. Many appreciate his wisdom in his book, *Homilies for Everyday Life*, first published in 2008. The 3rd printing sold out in 2016. Fr. Rudolph is also a stamp collector having taken over Fr. Paul Kuehne’s stamp collection after he died.

There are some outdoor enthusiasts who remember Fr. Rudolph’s love for berry picking, bird watching, duck hunting and fishing. He often went on fishing trips at Deschambault Lake and Canoe Lake with Frs. Florian, OSB and Werner Renneberg, OSB. Fr. Rudolph suffered a life-changing incident Nov. 3, 1977 when he was injured in the back with a shotgun while hunting ducks. During his convales-

cence Fr. Rudolph experienced the powerful awareness of God’s presence. After six and one half months he was well enough to return to the abbey. He went through long periods of pain and depression. Surgery in 1987 relieved him of most of his pain. He is able to walk short distances using crutches and that enabled him to return to parish work a year after leaving the hospital. It is a humbling experience to be dependent on others, he said.

“I began to realize that people who have to help the handicapped are given the opportunity to grow in charity. That realization made it easier for me to be dependent on others,” he remarked. Fr. Rudolph believes God has blessed him throughout his years as a priest and is grateful for his vocation. Periodically he still goes out to former parishes to celebrate marriages, funerals and anniversaries.

# People and events around the abbey

## 2015

Aug. 17-21 – Abbot Neal Roth, OSB of St. Martin's Abbey, WA, and Br. Alban Petesch, OSB of Assumption Abbey, ND led the five-year visitation of St. Peter's Abbey. A Visitation is held every five years for each abbey of the American-Cassinese Congregation.

Aug. 28-29 – Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB led a retreat for Benedictine Oblates at St. Benedict's Monastery and Retreat

Centre, Winnipeg, MB. He visited the Trappists at Our Lady of the Prairies in Holland, Manitoba on the way home.

Sept. 2 – Students of St. Peter's College gathered in the college gymnasium where they were welcomed at the beginning of the school year. College Chancellor Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB and College President Rob Harasymchuk gave a welcoming address. Professor Barbara Langhost gave a slide presentation offering helpful advice on the upcoming year. Other presentations were given by staff members. A lunch was sponsored by the Benedictines.

Sept. 8 – Some members of the monastic community attended a Year of Consecrated Life gathering at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon. It was sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Denis Mahoney Council. The Year of Consecrated Life was named by Pope Francis on Nov. 30, 2014 and it continued to Feb. 2, 2016. The theme was: "Look at the Past with Gratitude, Live the Present with Passion and Embrace the Future with Hope".

Sept. 13-18 – Abbot Peter attended the annual plenary meeting of the Canadian bishops in Cornwall, Ontario.

Sept. 19-22 – Abbot Peter attended a Canadian Religious Conference Council and regional meeting in Halifax.

Sept. 25 - 28 – Abbot Peter and Kathy Tumbach, abbey business manager, attended the annual ATRI conference in Saskatoon for religious superiors and financial staff.

Sept. 26 – Sixty-five students received awards worth \$70,000 at the annual St. Peter's College Scholarships and Awards Ceremony. Seven writing diplomas were awarded, as well as 20 honour roll certificates. Approximately 130 attended the event in the college gymnasium.

Oct. 1 – Abbot Peter and Br. Basil Schaan, OSB attended the unveiling of an historical monument in Wascana Centre, Regina. Some members of the Ursulines and Elizabethans of Saskatoon and formerly of Humboldt, were in attendance. More than 180 Sisters from across Canada attended the unveiling. The bronze monument, entitled Called to Serve, depicts a nun teaching a student as well as a nun taking care of the sick. It was sponsored by the Sisters Legacy Recognition Project to pay tribute to the first teachers and nurses in the province. The monument is southeast of the Legislative Building and overlooks Wascana Lake. A Sisters Legacy Recognition Mass was held at Holy Rosary Cathedral. Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, was the presiding celebrant. The Gray Nuns were the first religious in the province, arriving in 1860 to provide health care.

Oct. 2 – Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB presented a PowerPoint to students and staff on the history of St. Peter's College. The presentation, attended by 35, was on behalf of campus ministry. Among those in attendance were Fr. Demetrius Wasylyniuk, OSB and Br. Pierre Rouillard, OSB of St. Peter's College Campus Ministry.

Oct. 3 – Abbot Peter attended a Celebration of the Eucharist at Holy Family Cathedral with Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, Apostolic Nuncio to Canada. Other bishops concelebrating were: Donald Bolen, Diocese of Saskatoon; Bryan Bayda, CSSR, Eparchy of Saskatoon; Gary Gordon, Victoria, B.C.; and Gerald Wiesner, OMI (emeritus).

Oct. 6-9 – Eighteen members of the Anglican clergy with the Diocese of Saskatoon held their annual retreat at the abbey. The Anglican Diocese of Saskatoon has been holding its annual retreat at the



*PREPARES SOIL – Fr. Daniel Muyres, OSB prepares the soil on the south end of St. Peter's Abbey for a future flower garden.*



*REMOVES TREES – Fr. Daniel Muyres, OSB prepares to cut a branch of a tree that was removed on the south end of the abbey. Br. Wolfgang Thiem, OSB, his helper, watches. The area was cleared to prepare the grounds for a future flower garden.*

abbey since 2000. The retreats include attending Vespers with the Benedictines.

Oct. 7 – The annual Opportunities Edge at St. Peter's College featured 42 displays that were visited by 500 students from 15 schools. The displays offered information on post-secondary, trade and career choices.

Oct. 24 – Bernie and Shirley Karstad of Saskatoon became Oblates on Oblate Day during Mass, with Abbot Peter as celebrant. Barbara Saretsky of Humboldt and Jackie Saretsky of Saskatoon made their Final Oblations. Pol and Judy Zwart explained the prayer book, "Give Us This Day" to 35 attending the afternoon session. Craig Larson of Swan River, Manitoba gave a presentation on his visit to four Houses of Prayer. They are based on the model of the Catholic Worker Movement that was inaugurated by Dorothy Day.

Oct. 30 – Fr. Demetrius gave a presentation to 35 students at a noon hour luncheon on All Hallows Eve and Halloween. He explained the meaning of All Hallows Eve and the origins of Halloween. The presentation was sponsored by campus ministry.

Oct. 31 – The grass was green and wet for youngsters as they celebrated Halloween.

Nov. 3 – Abbot Peter took part in the annual meeting of Saskatchewan bishops and religious leaders in Saskatoon.

Nov. 5 – The first snowfall came, just enough to cover the ground. Bernie and Shirley Karstad left the abbey for Saskatoon to move into their new home. They had been living on the abbey grounds for five months while their condo was being built.

Nov. 13-15 – Fr. Paul was a facilitator at the Engaged Encounter (EE) held at St. Michael's Retreat Centre, Lumsden for the Archdiocese of Regina. Thirteen couples attended the weekend event. The EE was the final to be held at St. Michael's.

Nov. 18 – The monks woke up to blowing snow. Two centimeters blanketed the ground to become the first permanent snowfall for the fall season.

Nov. 20 – Abbot Peter attended the

chapel blessing and dedication at Trinity Manor in Saskatoon. Bishop Donald Bolen presided at Mass. Following was the dedication of stained-glass panels at Trinity Manor and Samaritan Place honoring the memories of Urban Donlevy and Rod Donlevy.

Nov. 22 – Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB and Fr. Daniel Muyres, OSB attended a celebration at St. Peter's Parish, Muenster commemorating the end of renovations and the installation of 28 stained-glass windows. The parish began renovations in 2008 to prepare for the centennial of the parish building in 2010. The renovations were completed in October.

Nov. 24 – Christian Lane of Georgia decided to leave the abbey after being a candidate for two weeks. Fr. Marceline De Pores of India left the abbey after staying there for 34 days. He had been visiting friends in Canada when he encountered problems with his Visa. Fr. Marceline stayed at the abbey while waiting for his Visa application to be approved. Fr. Marceline and another priest look after St. Michael's Parish in southern India. The parish has 6,000 families.

Dec. 1-3 – Br. Basil Schaan, OSB attended the Annual General Meeting of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) in Regina. The APAS meets each year to share information and promote sound agricultural policy.

Dec. 1-6 – Abbot Peter attended a Canadian Religious Conference council and regional meeting in Quebec.

## **2016**

Jan. 8 – Br. Dominic Leo, OSB returned for priesthood studies at St. Vincent Archabbey Seminary, Pennsylvania. He spent the Christmas holidays at St. Peter's Abbey.

Jan. 17-22 – In celebration of Christian Unity Week, special readings were read at Vigils from the Year of Mercy document of Pope Francis.

Jan. 22 – Abbot Peter attended the Mass of Christian Burial for Regina Archbishop Daniel Bohan at Holy Rosary Cathedral, Regina.

Jan. 22-24 – Fr. Demetrius Wasyluniuk,

OSB was a facilitator at an Engagement Encounter near Moose Jaw for the Archdiocese of Regina.

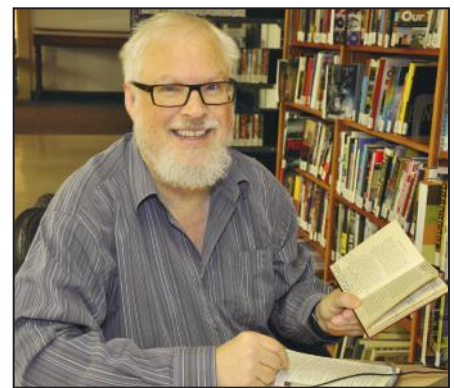
Jan. 29 – Fr. Demetrius, OSB, Fr. Rudolph Novocosky, OSB and Fr. Daniel Muyres, OSB attended the Year of Consecrated Life Banquet at Holy Family Cathedral, Saskatoon, sponsored by Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. The banquet was inspired by the Year of Consecrated Life. Its purpose was to recognize the legacy of dedicated service and commitment of the religious community in the formation and development of Catholic education.

Jan. 29 - Feb. 2 – Abbot Peter attended the Abbots and Priors Workshop at St. Joseph's Abbey in Covington, Louisiana. Fr. Brian Pierce, OP, addressed the topic, We Walk the Path Together, and Sr. Mary Donald Corcoran, OSB discussed Spiritual Sisters. The focus of the presentations was Benedictine wisdom.

Jan. 29-31 – The Annual Newman Retreat, sponsored by St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon was held at St. Peter's Abbey. Fr. Mike Dechant, OMI of Saskatoon addressed the theme: Heart To Heart. Twenty adults and students attended from Saskatoon. Fr. Paul of St. Peter's College Campus Ministry also attended.

Jan. 31-Feb. 7 – Alan Reese of Saskatoon, Oblate of St. Peter's Abbey,

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*REVIEWS RULE – Oblate Alan Reese of Saskatoon went on a personal retreat at St. Peter's Abbey where he enjoyed reading a copy of the Rule of St. Benedict, once owned by his friend, the late Fr. James Gray, OSB. Fr. James placed his own thoughts on the Rule in the margins of his book.*

# People and events around the abbey

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went on a personal retreat at the abbey. He enjoyed reading commentary of the late Fr. James Gray, OSB on the Rule of St. Benedict.

Feb. 2 – Long-time Oblate and friend of St. Peter's Abbey, Celine Wolsfeld, died. Her funeral was at St. Augustine, Humboldt on Feb. 5.

Feb. 7 – Abbot Peter and Br. Anthony Nguyen, OSB attended the Vietnamese New Year's celebration in Saskatoon.

Feb. 7 & 14 – Fr. Paul celebrated Mass at St. Dominic's Parish in Hudson Bay. Fr. Paul grew up in Hudson Bay and his parents reside there. The pastor, Fr. Dong, was on holidays in Vietnam. Fr. Demetrius filled in for Fr. Paul at his parish of St. Peter's, Muenster.

Feb. 9 – The annual Medieval Feast of St. Peter's College was held in the Jerome Assembly Room. The festival was attended by 62 students, staff, guest-writers and monks. The annual event, which precedes Lent, is organized by campus ministry.

Feb. 16 - 22 – Northhome Comfort Windows of Foam Lake replaced six windows in the hallway outside St. Peter's College (SPC) library and 13 windows in the library. The original windows were installed in 1958 when the link (now the SPC library) to the college was built. The work was carried out during the week-long break for students of SPC.

Feb. 17 – The monastic community watched the first of a weekly Lenten video on the psalms.

Feb. 22-29 – Abbot Peter attended a meeting of the Association of Western Canadian Bishops (AWCB) in Victoria, B.C.

March 5 – Oblate Donna Erickson of Saskatoon moved into the bunkhouse on the abbey grounds for a few months of solitude. She devoted her time to prayer and volunteer work



*MEDIEVAL BANQUET – Br. Kurt Van Kuren, OSB and Maury Wrubleski of St. Peter's College student services, perform on voice and guitar at the annual Medieval Feast of St. Peter's College. The banquet was held before Ash Wednesday and was sponsored by campus ministry.*

for the monastic community. Francis Swyripa of Edmonton arrived to spend four months working on the abbey archives.

March 6 & 13 – Abbot Peter led a Lenten retreat at St. Mary's Parish in Lanigan.

March 19 – Oblate Day was celebrated on the feast of St. Joseph, patron of the universal church and of Canada.



*DEDICATED OBLATE – Donna Erickson of Saskatoon, an Oblate of St. Peter's Abbey, did volunteer work while living on the abbey grounds for a few months. Her skills in painting were used to brighten some of the hallways, and her "green thumb" was a tremendous help in the abbey courtyard.*

Oblates Ken and Bonnie Roberts of Saskatoon gave a talk to 40 in the Jerome Assembly Room on the Rule of St. Benedict.

March 21 – Abbot Peter, Fr. Daniel and Fr. Paul attended the Celebration of the Mass of Chrism at the Cathedral of the Holy Family. Fr. Daniel was presented a Papal Blessing certificate in recognition of 55 years of priesthood. Fr. Paul received a 10 year Papal Blessing certificate.

March 22 – A Seder Supper was hosted by St. Peter's College Campus Ministry. Eleven staff and students took part in a traditional meal that became the Last Supper.

April 1-3 – Ten couples took part in the Saskatoon Diocese Engagement Encounter at St. Peter's Abbey. Fr. Demetrius was one of the facilitators.

April 5 – St. Benedict's Feast Day was celebrated by the Benedictines and a few staff and visitors. The feast day was moved from March 21 which fell during Holy Week.

April 18-22 – The Humboldt Music Festival hosted several events in the Jerome Assembly Room.



*PRAYERS IN CEMETERY – The Benedictines of St. Peter's Abbey celebrated Vespers in the cemetery during their annual retreat.*

April 25 - May 2 – Fr. Paul visited Br. Dominic Leo, OSB, seminarian at St. Vincent Archabbey, Pennsylvania, and junior of St. Peter's Abbey. Fr. Paul is the junior master at St. Peter's Abbey. He met with Benedictines involved in vocations to discuss their program. Fr. Paul attended the 225th anniversary celebration of the St. Vincent Basilica Parish. The parish is the oldest continuous Catholic parish west of the Allegheny Mountains. The visit was special for Fr. Paul who attended St. Vincent Seminary and convoked from St. Vincent Seminary 10 years previously.



*RETREAT MASTER – Abbot Lawrence Stasyszen of St. Gregory's Abbey, Shawnee, Oklahoma was the retreat master for the annual St. Peter's Abbey retreat. Abbot Lawrence discussed the theme: Mercy in the Rule of St. Benedict.*

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May 5 – Abbot Lawrence Stasyszen addressed the public in the Jerome Assembly Room, with the topic of Monastic and Benedictine Spirituality in Today's World.

May 6 – Br. Wolfgang stocked the abbey reservoir with 150 fingerling fish. He planned to catch them in the fall.

May 7 – Fr. Cosmas Epifano, OSB joined the 4th degree Knights of Columbus at an Abbot Severin Gertkin Assembly exemplification in Humboldt. He was among five men who were candidates for the 4th degree. The exemplification honored two late members of the Abbot Severin Gertkin Assembly: Leonard Novecosky and Leo Schmid. Abbot Peter presented a history of his late brother Leonard. Fr. Paul, friar (chaplain) of the Abbot Severin Gertkin Assembly, asked the blessing before the meal.

May 11 – Rainfall during Lauds (morning prayer) at 6:20 a.m. turned into wet snow that covered the ground. May began with very warm temperatures that soared into the high 20s and 30s C.

May 13 – Several monks attended the Bishop's Dinner at the Saskatoon cathedral.

May 16-19 – Fr. Leander Dosch, 91, formerly of Annaheim, and a former monk of St. Peter's Abbey, visited the abbey along with his niece, Gwendolyn Fagnou of Calgary. Fr. Leander was a Benedictine monk of St. Peter's abbey until he followed his growing convictions to join the stricter Cistercian monks on August 5, 1975. Fr. Leander was elected abbot in 1995 of the Trappist (Reformed Cistercian) Monastery at Huntsville, Utah, 35 miles north of Salt Lake City. Abbot Peter Novecosky was present for his blessing on March 12, 1995. Fr. Leander's term finished in 2000 at the retirement age of 75.



*VISITS FORMER HOME – Fr. Leander Dosch, 91, originally of Annaheim, and a former monk of St. Peter's Abbey, visited the abbey along with his niece, Gwendolyn Fagnou of Calgary. Fr. Leander was a Benedictine monk of St. Peter's abbey. He joined the stricter Cistercian monks on August 5, 1975. He was elected abbot in 1995 of the Trappist (Reformed Cistercian) Monastery at Huntsville, Utah, 35 miles north of Salt Lake City. His term as abbot finished in 2000 at the retirement age of 75.*

May 16-21 – Fr. John Mullins, 56, of the Toronto Archdiocese visited the abbey for a personal retreat. He toured some local communities and communities in eastern Saskatchewan. He said he was impressed with the vast, clear skies and sunshine.

May 24 – A Staff Appreciation Dinner was held for the staff of St. Peter's Abbey. Donald Ward of the Prairie Messenger and Lisa Bruesch of St. Peter's Abbey Kitchen Services were recognized for their 15 years of service.

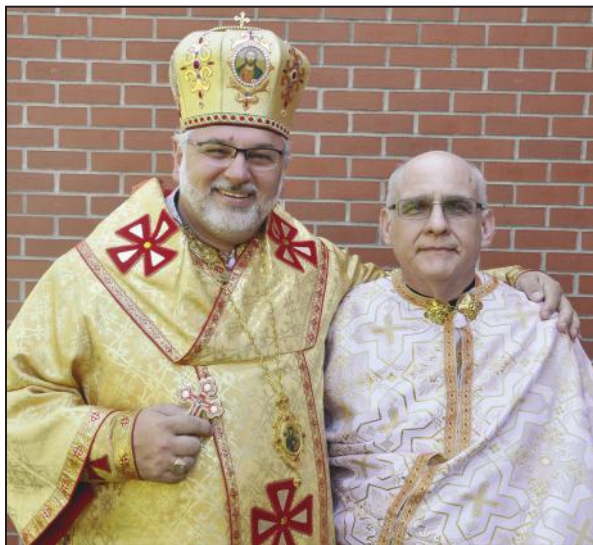
*Continued on page 10*

# People and events around the abbey

*Continued from page 9*

May 26-29 – Abbot Peter attended the 31st General Assembly of the Canadian Religious Conference in Montreal. The gathering is held every two years for leaders of religious congregations to share experiences and daily challenges.

June 6-9 – The Eparchy of Saskatoon held its annual clergy retreat with Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR and 19 members attending. They reflected on *Amoris Laetitia: The Joy of Love*, by Pope Francis.



**EPARCHY RETREAT** – Fr. Demetrius Wasyluniuk, OSB, guest-master of St. Peter's Abbey, assisted Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR of the Eparchy of Saskatoon, at the annual eparchy retreat. The eparchy held its annual retreat in June at the abbey. The theme of the retreat was: *Amoris Laetitia: The Joy of Love*, by Pope Francis.

June 12 - 16 – Abbot Peter was one of the visitors at St. Leo's Abbey in Florida.

June 14-18 – Fr. Paul attended a monastic formation meeting at Subiaco Abbey in Arkansas. Fr. Joel Rippinger, OSB of Marmion Abbey was the guest speaker.

June 19-25 – Abbot Peter and Fr. Paul attended the 52nd General Chapter of the American Cassinese Congregation (ACC) at Belmont Abbey, North Carolina. St. Peter's Abbey is a member

of the ACC which meets every three years and oversees 21 Benedictine communities, 19 of which are independent and two, dependent. Benedictine monasteries were represented from the United States, Canada, Mexico and Puerto Rico. St. Peter's Abbey is the only monastery in Canada which is affiliated with the ACC.

June 30 – The Saskatoon berry season began early at the abbey with six gallons of berries picked. They were enjoyed

by monks and guests. By late July, the berries yielded 142 gallons of Saskatoons for the 2016 year, beating the previous record of 140 in 2015. Freda and Ardel Paproski of Hudson Bay, parents of Fr. Paul, picked most of the berries.

July 9 – Abbot Peter celebrated Mass for Oblate Day where Lawrence, Emily and Jenna Hill of Bruno made their Final Oblations. Alexander Cinesi of Winnipeg made his First Oblation.

July 11 – Fr. Daniel Muyres, OSB and Fr. Rudolph Novecosky, OSB were recognized on the Feast Day of St. Benedict for their anniversaries of monastic profession. Fr. Daniel has been a professed Benedictine monk for 61 years and Fr. Rudolph, 60 years.

July 11 – Bishop Donald Bolen informed the Diocese of Saskatoon that he has been appointed archbishop of the Archdiocese of Regina. He fills the chair left vacant by Archbishop Daniel Bohan who died on January 15. Bishop Donald was ordained as bishop of Saskatoon on March 25, 2010.



**SASKATOON HARVEST** – Ardel and Freda Paproski of Hudson Bay display Saskatoons they picked at St. Peter's Abbey in July. The Paproskis helped the monks pick 142 gallons of Saskatoons for 2016. Ardel and Freda are the parents of Fr. Paul, OSB.

July 17 – The 94th Mount Carmel Pilgrimage was attended by more than 400 who enjoyed beautiful weather throughout the day. Bishop Donald Bolen presided at the Mass. He was assisted by Benedictine concelebrants: Abbot Peter, Fr. Daniel, Fr. Demetrius and Fr. Paul. Fr. Guy Rivard, OP of Montreal also concelebrated. Brs. Anthony Nguyen, OSB and Benedict van Ginkel, OSB were the assistants.

July 18-19 – The 6th Annual Clergy Sports Day was held at St. Peter's Abbey with 54 priests attending, assisted by 11 members of the Knights of Columbus. Bishop Donald Bolen and Abbot Peter took part in the events which included: cards, board games, ping pong, darts, horseshoes, horse hock, ladder golf, soccer, volleyball and basketball. The annual event is sponsored by the Saskatchewan Knights of Columbus.

July 20 – The Oblate library in the abbey guest wing was reorganized with the help of Oblate Donna Erickson and Crystal Hampton of Saskatoon.

July 30 – Brothers and sisters of Fr. Rudolph attended Vespers and a special gathering in celebration of his 60 years of monastic profession and his 80th birthday.

July 31 – Br. Dominic Leo, OSB returned to the abbey for three weeks in August. He was taking summer classes at St. Vincent Seminary, Pennsylvania where he will be entering his 3rd year of theology.

Aug. 2 - 4 – Abbot Peter attended the annual Supreme Convention of the Knights of Columbus in Toronto.

Aug. 14 – Fr. Paul celebrated his 10th anniversary to the priesthood with friends and family. Fr. Paul was ordained Aug. 12, 2006 at St. Peter's Parish, Muenster.

Aug. 16 – A farewell coffee was held for Anna Nguyen who worked in the abbey business office since last October. Her last day of work was Aug. 19.

Aug. 18 – Anna Hergert of Buffalo Pound donated a textile wall hanging of the Transfiguration (Mk 9:2-13). The scene hangs outside the Blessed Sacrament chapel in Sts. Peter and Paul Church. Anna is the instructor and founder of Fabric Design Workshop that was held at St. Peter's Abbey.

Aug. 21 – Br. Anthony Nguyen, OSB celebrated his 25th anniversary to monastic profession with a Mass, renewal of vows, social gathering and festive banquet. Renee de Moissac of St. Benedict led a half hour organ recital in



*MOUNT CARMEL – Bishop Donald Bolen celebrated his final Mass at the annual Mount Carmel pilgrimage as Bishop of Saskatoon. He is seen preparing for the Blessing of the Fields which followed Mass. With him are concelebrants: Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB and Fr. Demetrius Wasylyniuk, OSB. More than 400 attended the 2016 Mount Carmel pilgrimage which enjoyed beautiful weather.*

Sts. Peter and Paul Church during the afternoon. The anniversary was attended by the Benedictines and 70 relatives and friends of Br. Anthony.

Aug. 22 - 31 – Sisters Elisabeth and Jeannine Coulombe, Grey Nuns of Edmonton visited the abbey on a retreat. Fr. Paul was their facilitator.

Aug. 23 – Abbot Peter and Br. Basil Schaan, OSB attended a celebration of 65 years of the educational legacy of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary in Prince Albert.

Aug. 29 - Sept. 3 – Oblates Bernie and Shirley Karstad of Saskatoon helped the Benedictines harvest the gardens and orchard. The Karstads are long-time friends of the Benedictines and have been very generous in their volunteer work for the community.

Sept. 1-18 – Abbot Peter attended the Benedictine Abbots Congress at Sant Anselmo in Rome.

Sept. 1 – Students returned to St. Peter's College for another term. The 2016-17 school year witnessed an increase in enrollment and in the number of students in the student residence.

Sept. 23 - 25 – Abbot Peter and Kathy Tumback, abbey business manager, attended the annual ATRI conference in Ottawa for religious superiors and financial staff.

Sept. 26-30 – Abbot Peter attended the annual plenary meeting of the Canadian bishops in Cornwall, Ontario.



*CLERGY SPORTS DAY – Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB takes part in the annual Knights of Columbus Clergy Sports Day in July, attended by 54 clergy and 11 members of the Knights of Columbus. Abbot Peter throws a "horse hock" in the game of Bunnock where players knock out an opposing team's line of bones.*

# Fr. Joseph Ackerman retires as full-time pastor

Fr. Joseph Ackerman, OSB is known for his sense of humour and gentle disposition. He enjoys brightening the atmosphere at Mass and social gatherings with light-hearted jokes. Fr. Joseph loves to share his wisdom and insight, as well, in his homilies and stories which he nourishes through his study of scripture and spiritual reading.

A new milestone was reached by Fr. Joseph in August of 2016 when he retired at the age of 91. He had been serving the parishes of St. Bruno in Bruno and St. Agnes, Peterson and decided to remain in the rectory at Bruno to continue as the assistant to his replacement, Fr. Cosmas Epifano, OSB.

The love of serving as a priest has enabled Fr. Joseph to work in parishes for almost 60 years. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 8, 1958. The parishes of St. Bruno and St. Agnes recognized Fr. Joseph in 2008 for his 50 years of priesthood. A jubilee celebration was held at the abbey as well. Fr. Joseph has been a monk of St. Peter's Abbey for almost 65 years, receiving his profession in June of 1952.

Baptized Peter, Fr. Joe was born in the village of Balgonie on Sept. 20, 1924, to Andrew and Emilia Ackerman. He was among 15 children in this family. His father was employed by the Canadian Pacific Railroad Co., which necessitated moving to various locations. The family was poor, remembers Fr. Joseph, but his parents kept everyone happy and united. He received his early education in Wolseley, Estevan and Regina. After a brief period of employment, Fr. Joseph enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force, serving overseas in the Second World War from 1943-45.

A new direction was taken by Fr. Joseph (Peter) from 1947-51 when he attended St. Peter's College and then entered the Order of St. Benedict where

he received his present name "Joseph". He completed a year novitiate at St. Peter's Abbey and then continued his seminary studies at St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn. Fr. Joseph was ordained to the priesthood in St. Peter's Cathedral, Muenster by the late Bishop Francis Klein. Following ordination Fr. Joseph taught at St. Peter's High School, assisted in various parishes, served as assistant business manager at St. Peter's Abbey and became pastor of the Muenster and St. Gregory parishes.

In 1970, Fr. Joseph went on a sabbatical where he studied at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., and then at Duke University, Durham, N.C. On his return he was appointed pastor of St. Anthony and St. James parishes, Lake Lenore. His next

assignment was the Pilger and Middle Lake parishes. He then became pastor of the parishes at Bruno and Peterson.

Wherever Fr. Joseph served, he was active in parish and community groups and clubs. He enjoyed the outdoors having a fondness for hunting, fishing, skating, hockey and golf.



*DEDICATED PASTOR – Fr. Joseph Ackerman, OSB retired as full-time pastor in the parishes of Bruno and Peterson. He will continue residing at the Bruno rectory where he will assist his replacement, Fr. Cosmas Epifano, OSB. Fr. Joseph, 92, has been serving parishes for the past 58 years.*

## 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, the press 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 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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