

# ST. PETER'S ABBAY

*newsletter*



Vol. 12, No. 3    Winter    1989



# Abbot Jerome's report

By Abbot Jerome Weber

The annual interdenomination thanksgiving service in Humboldt was held on Oct. 11, 1988, in the Senior Citizens' Hall. There were hymns, readings from the Bible, talks by the different denominations, and even some interesting entertainment by children from the public school.

The CCCB had its annual meeting in Ottawa Oct. 17-21. One of the highlights during this week was the celebration by about 100 bishops in a mass of thanksgiving for the 1,000 years of Ukrainian Catholicism. This was done in the beautiful new church built for the occasion by the Ukrainian Catholics in Canada. En route home I stopped to visit Br. William in Toronto where he is completing his theological studies at St. Basil's Seminary.

The CWL diocesan mini-convention was held in St. Gregor on Oct. 27.

On Oct. 30 I was celebrant at the 60th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Ted Brockman, of Humboldt, at the chapel of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth. Over the years Ted had been a great benefactor of St. Peter's in many ways through transportation of students on many occasions, and later, in supplying excavation, sand, gravel and concret when it came to buildings.

I was at the Catholic Bible College of Canada at Canmore, Alta., from Nov. 7-25 to give a course in the history of our church to the students there. It gave me a good opportunity again to delve more deeply into this fascinating story of how the promise of Christ to be with his church has been fulfilled amid the good and bad times of almost 2,000 years.

Immediately after this I attended the Provincial Charismatic Conference in Regina, Nov. 26-27. During this conference a statement of the R.C. bishops of Saskatchewan was given to the people which encouraged and approved this movement. Each of them took part in the conference by giving a talk to the

people. The conference concluded with a mass on Sunday, Nov. 27, at which Bishop Mahoney and Bishop Delaquis and I concelebrated.

On Dec. 4, in Saskatoon, I attended a meeting of the R.C. bishops of our province and the provincial committee on agriculture. A statement was drawn up by the committee from material gathered from the many groups that met during the past winter to discuss the statement on agriculture made by the bishops in November 1987, and, along with several recommendations, was presented to the bishops.

This statement, along with several recommendations, was made public in Regina, Dec. 19, at a press conference in which I participated. A brief summary of the interview was given on CBC-TV later in the day. The bishops decided to implement three of the recommendations at once. These are: 1) the appointment of the same committee to continue the study of the crisis in agriculture in Saskatchewan, 2) appointment of an ad hoc committee to work toward influencing the government to declare a moratorium of one year on all farm foreclosures, and 3) to employ someone to act in a rural life ministry.



## ST. PETER'S ABBEY NEWSLETTER

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Logo designed by Kurt Van Kuren, OSB.

# Fr. Norbert's Abbey Chronicle

*Edited by Brother Gerald*

**Oct. 3**

Fr. Leo Hinz, vicar general, chancellor of the diocese and pastor of St. Augustine's Church in Humboldt, is attending the National Federation of Priests Senate held in Ontario.

**Oct. 3**

Fr. Bernard Stauber, home on sabbatical from his parish in Brazil, is travelling with his family to visit other relatives in British Columbia.

**Oct. 6**

A small social gathering was held for the monks to celebrate Abbot Jerome's return from Rome (see abbot's report) and a farewell tonight for Br. Bernard Lange, who will attend the fall semester at Sant Anselmo in Rome (see Br. Bernard's diary). \*Fr. Daniel Muyres had knee surgery in Saskatoon today as a day patient.

**Oct. 7**

Frs. Norbert Schwinghammer, Andrew Britz and Brs. Stanley Vindvoghel and Gerald Moran motored to Prince Albert to examine, play and hear pipe organs. The day was climaxed at the Presentation Sisters Convent where the monks were invited to hear their Rogers organ which is part pipe and part electronic; following the evening meal they joined the Sisters in Evening Praise.

**Oct. 15**

The Saskatoon Boys' Choir, here for a workshop and get-acquainted weekend, gave a mini-concert for the community.

**Oct. 16**

Abbot Jerome Weber is attending the CCCB meeting of bishops in Ottawa this week.



The Saskatoon Boys' Choir performing for the community, directed by Jennifer Encinas-Veszi.

**Oct. 22**

A first for the Abbacy Centre: a native spirituality workshop conducted by Mrs. Amy Busch of Saskatoon was held today. Mrs. Busch, whose husband is German, is herself part Moslem and part native. Br. Gerald attended the workshop which was creation/nature-centred spirituality.

**Oct. 24**

Terry Garchinsky of Naicam dropped in to see Frs. James, Maurice and Peter. Terry is doing a fair amount of newspaper writing since he returned from the east coast of the U.S.A. recently.

**Oct. 25**

Br. Wolfgang Thiem returned today from his home visit to Germany. The abbey will be a lot more secure and stable now that he has returned.

**Oct. 26**

The Tony Saretsky family donated a white spruce evergreen to the abbey. Greg, son of Tony and Carmel Saretsky, assisted Br. Gerald Moran in transplanting the tree to its new location, directly east of the proposed new abbey church planned for construction next spring.

**Oct. 27**

A steady flow of crabapples to our refectory and lunch room, one variety more tasty than the next, is proof not only of a good crop, but of the diligence of Frs. Xavier Benning and James Gray who, besides caring for the bees and gardens, are now doing alone what was formerly done by all available hands.

**Nov. 2**

Brs. Basil Schaan and Randy Senecal attended a hog seminar-symposium in Saskatoon. They were unable to attend the community meeting at which Fr. Andrew Britz spoke on Postures in the Liturgy.

**Nov. 5**

Fr. Maurice and Br. Gerald Moran attended the Multiculturalism Dialogue

sessions, sponsored by the Saskatchewan provincial government in Humboldt today.

**Nov. 6**

Abbot Jerome Weber left today for a three-week teaching assignment at the Canadian Catholic Bible College in Canmore, Alta. He will teach church history.

**Nov. 9**

Fr. Peter Novecosky is attending a workshop on AIDS sponsored by the Canadian Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan (CHAS).

**Nov. 13**

St. Peter's "Schola" performed at the annual Inter-Faith festival of religious-ethnic music in Saskatoon. The schola was composed this year of Fr. Peter Novecosky, Dr. Ed Dyck, Brs. Stanley Vindevoghel, Patrick Grennan, Randy Senecal and Gerald Moran. Dr. Dyck, our university English professor, assisted with the singing of two Gregorian Chant selections: a Vesper hymn to St. Benedict and the familiar Salve Regina (in Latin). \*The threatening weather prevented all the Saskatoon Oblates of St. Benedict, except Petronella Petersen, from attending the Nov. 12 Oblate Day.

**Nov. 16**

Fr. Maurice Weber, who has been feeling poorly, has posted an explanation or clarification of his health condition for the community. Lab studies indicate that he has a "low grade" or slow-acting cancer of the liver. It seems there is a malformation of the liver blood vessels, a rather rare condition which has been found in some Oriental countries. It has not been decided what kind of treatment should be used at this time.

**Nov. 17**

The diocesan Vocation Committee is holding a workshop tonight for the parish vocation representatives, which will be animated by Fr. Doug Jeffreys, OMI. Fr. Maurice Weber and Br. Ger-



St. Peter's Schola "tuning up" prior to the November 13 performance in Saskatoon.

ald Moran are representatives attending from the abbey.

#### Nov. 19

Today is the annual day of prayer for the members of the abbey who have died. A custom of St. Peter's, begun in recent years, is to display the death notice photos of our deceased at the rear of the chapel as a reminder for the living members to pray for them during the Liturgical prayers we recite as a community.

#### Nov. 23

Br. Basil Schaan has entered St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Humboldt, for a hernia operation tomorrow. The newsletter editor is anxious to compare notes since he underwent the same operation two years ago.

#### Nov. 27

Frs. Daniel Muyres and Bernard Stauber are attending a retreat by Father George Maloney at Queen's House of Retreats in Saskatoon.

#### Nov. 29

An excellent presentation was made by an abbey monk on behalf of the local Alcoholics Anonymous to the student assembly of St. Peter's College. \*Br. Gregory Brodner is having a second

cataract operation in Saskatoon. The first one was a complete (total) success.

#### Dec. 1

A community meeting was held today with the Winnipeg architect for the abbey church, Etienne Gaboury, who was kept busy answering many questions from the abbey members, questions promoted by the presence of the church model which was displayed today.

#### Dec. 3

The Abbey Liturgy Committee meeting, held at 1:30 deliberated over the design of the new church as it might affect the liturgical ceremonies for both large and small groups. Members of the committee are Fr. Peter Novacosky, and Brs. Patrick Grennan, Thomas Ward and Gerald Moran.

#### Dec. 7

Fr. Matthew Michel, born on this date in 1896, was feeling well enough to celebrate his 92nd birthday with the community in the dining room. Fr. Matthew still plays pool and takes daily walks.

#### Dec. 8

Three monks and three sisters trav-



elled to Saskatoon, at the invitation of Dr. Henry Woolf of the University Drama Department, to see the play titled *The Mysteries* held in St. John's Cathedral. Sisters Valerie, Martina and Victoria were accompanied by Brs. Basil, Randy and Gerald.

#### **Dec. 11**

Br. Kurt Van Kuren, taking further study in psychology in San Francisco, returned home today for the Christmas vacation about one week ahead of all the other student-monks. Apparently he is to return a few days earlier than most other students.

#### **Dec. 13**

Br. Basil Schaan and George Burton travelled to Yorkton to attend a "small crop clubs" seminar, a project of the Agriculture Development Fund sponsored

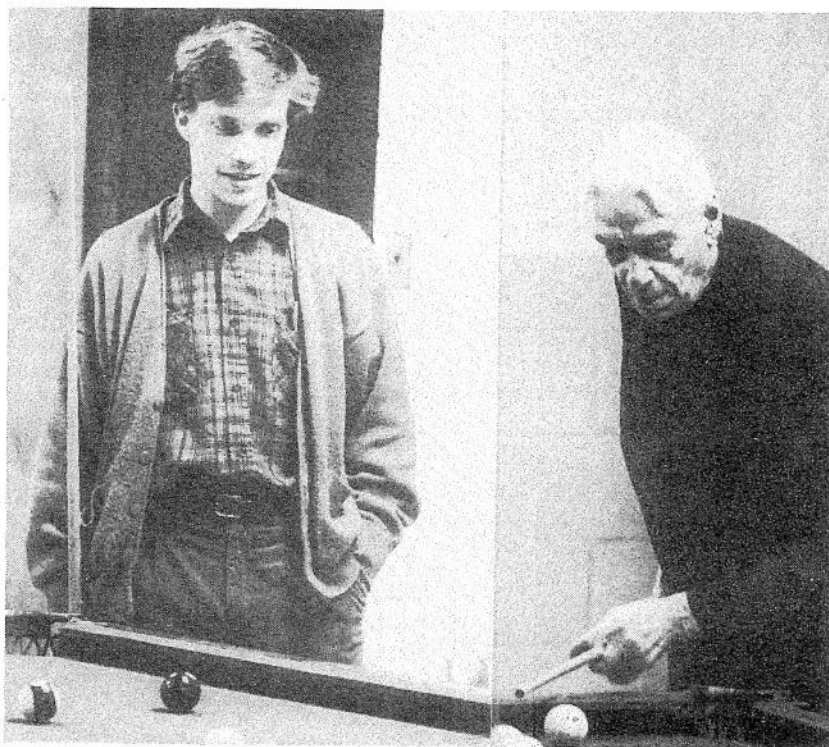
by Saskatchewan Agriculture. The same day, Brs. Stanley Vindevoghel and Gerald Moran made a quick trip to Regina to examine a pipe organ at Campion College and St. Mary's Church.

#### **Dec. 15**

Another community meeting to discuss the issues surrounding the design of the proposed abbey church. Also, this evening Denis Fortin was reinvested as a novice (see Novice News in this issue).

#### **Dec. 16**

Tonight is the annual Student-Faculty Christmas Banquet when the students invite their families to meet and eat with their teachers. The monks on faculty this year are: Maurice Weber, principal; James Gray, English; Albert Ruetz, mathematics; Florian Ren-

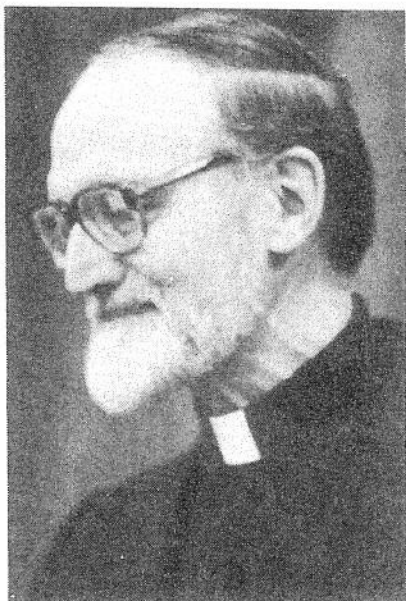


Kevin McGee (24), seminarian from Edmonton, and Fr. Matthew Michel (92).

neberg, biology; and Stanley Vindevoghel, dean of students.

#### Dec. 17

Day of Prayer and Recollection for the community from Noon Praise to 5 p.m., with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.



Fr. James Gray, guest speaker at the Faculty-Parent-Student banquet.

#### Dec. 18

The St. Peter's Chorus under the direction of Frank Dorsch of Humboldt, performed their annual Christmas Concert this afternoon in the College Gym. Monk members of the chorus are: Peter Novecosky, Patrick Grennan, Randy Senecal and Gerald Moran.

#### Dec. 19?

Br. Richard Meidl, studying theology at St. Meinrad's Archabbey in Indiana, and Br. Bernard Lange, who has spent the last 2½ months at Sant Anselmo in Rome, both returned to Saskatoon today. On Dec. 19 the last of our absent monks, William Thurmeier, is expected to return from Toronto where he is

a student at St. Basil's College, taking pastoral studies. \*The monks in charge of the hog barns are having cares and problems of which the community was largely unaware when the pigs were in the care of lay help. Today at table they spoke of a "piglet" which had to be disposed of because it caught pneumonia after its tail had been bitten off by a hyper-active peer.

#### Dec. 20

An "aroma" in the abbey corridor announces that Fr. Matthew Michel's annual parcel of lindburger cheese has arrived (courtesy of the Post Office). Fr. Matthew seems to have great difficulty finding someone with whom to share the odorous cheese. Not since the spread of the garden fertilizer this past summer has there been such a strong smell permeating the monastery.

#### Dec. 24

The Christmas Midnight Mass was celebrated by Abbot Jerome Weber with Frs. Norbert Schwinghammer and James Gray as concelebrants. Music was provided by Brs. Stanley Vindevoghel on organ; William Thurmeier, flute and organ; Kurt Van Kuren, guitar and cantor; and Gerald Moran, on harpsichord.

#### Dec. 26

The day after Christmas, Boxing Day, is the traditional day when family and relatives of the monks come to St. Peter's to visit. Since the newer monks have come from greater distances, there seemed to be fewer relatives visiting in recent years. \*Also today, the Sisters of St. Elizabeth of St. Scholastica's Convent (Muenster), invited the monks and all the Sisters of St. Elizabeth in Humboldt and other houses in the vicinity including the generalate in Saskatoon, for a few hours of coffee, calories and community.

#### Dec. 27

All but a few monks were able to accept the invitation of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth to attend a gathering in Hum-



**Monk's Christmas social.**

boldt. There were games, visiting, prayers and good food to be shared.

#### **Dec. 29**

The annual "Junior" Christmas party in Bruno (see Novice News). \*Fr. Andrew Britz called a meeting of the abbey organists to help finalize the church plans relative to the pipe organ requested by the community for the abbey church.

#### **Dec. 30**

In accord with a suggestion at the organists meeting, Brs. Stanley Vindvoghel and Gerald Moran accompanied Br. William Thurmeier to Sacred Heart Cathedral in Prince Albert to gather data on their pipe organ. The main purpose was so all the organists could have some specifications to relate to when discussing organ size for the new church. Br. William was not able to be with us on our first visit to the cathedral in Prince Albert last autumn. \*The organists were home in time for supper and for the community meeting to discuss the St. Peter's farm. Abbot Jerome opened the meeting with

a report on what had been done in the province and in the abbacy since the Saskatchewan bishops issued their statement on agriculture last year. Then Br. Basil Schaan reported on the meetings he had attended during the past year. In the discussion which followed it was agreed that a committee should be appointed to propose practical suggestions and possible solutions for our own area.

#### **Jan. 1**

Tonight there was a community social after Vigils to bring in the New Year and bid farewell to the student-monks returning to their classes within the coming week.

#### **Jan. 3**

University of Saskatchewan classes resumed today. \*Br. Gerald Moran left for Queen's House, Saskatoon, for a four-day private retreat while the guestwing is quiet.

#### **Jan. 7**

Fr. Matthew Michel, 92, accepted the invitation to attend the 60th wedding



anniversary celebration of former parishioners Mr. and Mrs. George Fleischhacker of Pilger. Fr. Matthew who witnessed the marriage 60 years ago, was chauffeured by a son of the parish, Fr. Bernard Stauber.

**Jan. 9.**

The St. Peter's Chorus with three monk-members resumed rehearsals following the Christmas break. Frank Dorsch of Humboldt is the conductor.

**Jan. 15**

Today is the second anniversary of the death of Br. Oswald King. We are reminded several times each day of his versatility and inventiveness. Twice daily the monks are called to prayer by the College tower bell which Br. Oswald wired to be rung electrically.

\*Also, today is the first anniversary of the official entry into the monastery of our three novices: Vincent Regnier, Demetrius Wasylyniuk and Denis Fortin. Be sure to read a special feature



Brothers Stanley Vindevoghel and William Thurmeier examine the pipe organ in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Prince Albert.

introduced in this issue titled Novice News. There is a rumor that if you want to find out anything about the monastery, ask the novices. We hope the editor is their friend!

**Jan. 16**

Leo Weber, brother of Abbot Jerome Weber, began regular work in the abbey archives this week. He was introduced to this work by his son, Russel (now a Humboldt lawyer), who did the original cataloguing; he provided the Guide and developed the photo file.

**Jan. 17**

Fr. Maurice Weber, who is suffering from a rare cancer of the liver, has had his first chemo-therapy treatment. Although there seems to be no serious side-effects so far, he is obviously weaker than before the treatment.



**Frank Dorsch, director of the St. Peter's Chorus.**

**Jan. 20**

Br. Randy Senecal motored with brother-in-law John Will to Rosetown to attend the funeral of Br. Randy's cousin. His parents, Paul and Elaine Senecal,

returned from Arizona to attend the funeral.

**Jan. 21**

It is very unusual for Abbot Jerome Weber to become ill. With his regular work and exercise he is in very good shape. So it was with surprise that he was unable to attend the Divine Office due to illness this morning. By evening he was feeling well again.

**Jan. 25**

Another community meeting re the abbey church. Four main issues were dispensed with during the two-hour meeting; prospects look good for a spring beginning for the church construction.



**Fr. Bernard Stauber a few days before he returned to Brazil.**

**Jan. 31**

The best blizzard of the season which began yesterday morning, has cancelled all classes in Michael Hall for today. Fr. Bernard Stauber seemed to enjoy the snow removal . . . a change of "pace" from his work in Brazil. Fr. Bernard intends to return to his Brazilian parish about Feb. 11.

# St. Peter's College Report

By Deborah Sarauer, Bookstore Manager

As the winter session for St. Peter's College gets underway, both students and faculty seem to be getting on very well. Most people seem to have conquered a winter cold and are looking forward to the rest of the year spent cold and flu-free. The university program has only had two students withdraw during the 1988-89 academic year. The Office Education Program is also enjoying success with their students which currently stands at 20, down only four from September.

The new classes that started in January are well underway. They are: Computer Science which is taught by Ray Jordan from Saskatoon and Business Law which is taught by Russell Weber from Humboldt.

A new instructor is Randy Mason who replaced Colleen Murphy for Social Psychology. Colleen taught until Nov. 1 but felt that the drive was too strenuous during the winter months. Colleen is expecting a baby during January. Randy is a psychologist at the Federal Penitentiary in Prince Albert.

On Dec. 3, there was a student liturgy. On Dec. 16, there was the annual Christmas banquet attended by about 200 students, parents, faculty and staff. The evening's after-dinner speaker was Father James Gray, OSB. He gave a most thought-provoking and witty talk which included readings from the poetry of Robert Frost. With his dry wit, Father James made the audience aware of choices that they make over a lifespan and the effect of those choices.

Father Albert Ruetz, OSB, is having a busy year as math instructor and sports director. There was a volleyball tournament with 16 teams in the early fall. Since then students have been busy with racquetball, curling, ice hockey and pool. Since Christmas Myrna Britz has been coming to the College to lead aerobics. The students are enjoying all of these activities during their regular sports period. Students

also have access to cross-country skis. With the mild weather of the last week, the school's cross-country skis are becoming popular.

The weekly student assembly has been both informative and well attended. This year we have had as part of assembly: an all-candidates meeting, a speaker from AIDS Saskatoon, sessions on studying and writing papers. We have also had films about nuclear war and another about pornography. In upcoming assemblies we will be hearing a speaker from South Africa and another speaker will talk about career choices. We have started to invite the Pre-Vocational students to assembly. They attend the ones that are of interest to them as high school students.



Fr. Maurice Weber, master of ceremonies at the Christmas banquet.

The most important development at the College is that Father Maurice Weber, OSB, will be temporarily resigning as College principal on Feb. 1, 1989. Tony Saretsky of Humboldt has agreed to act as interim director. Father Maurice will continue to teach Chemistry. The halls of Michael Hall



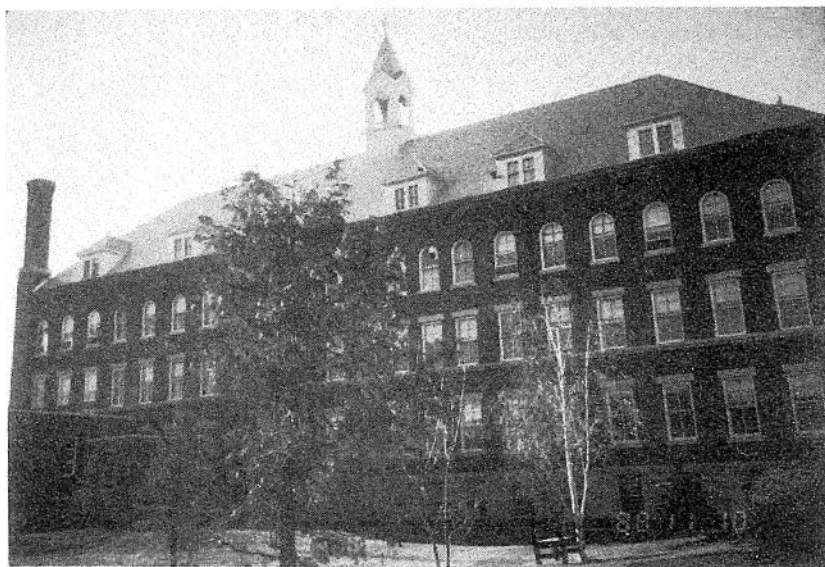
**The Band Welfare Administrators' Christmas dinner.**

will continue to be permeated with the smells coming from the Chemistry lab as Father Maurice's students carry out such experiments as "melting moth-balls," all in the cause of learning Chemistry!

Advertising for the next university

year has already begun in local papers and the Saskatoon Star Phoenix as well as the Regina Leader Post.

Bro. Stanley Vindevoghel, OSB, and Deborah Sarauer are making the rounds of area schools to encourage Grade 12 students to start their university career at St. Peter's College.



**Michael Hall taken by resident student Paul Chapuis of Prince Albert.**

# Br. Bernard's Sant Anselmo diary

Edited by Gerald Moran

(Br. Bernard Lange, St. Peter's farm manager, attended the fall session at Sant Anselmo, the Benedictine College in Rome, as part of his period of recuperating from a heart operation earlier in the year. Fr. Sylvester Vredegoor from our Brazil mission also attended these sessions.

(As part of the courses at Sant Anselmo, the students take part in extensive touring, which Br. Bernard relates faithfully each day in his diary. The academic courses taken were: Scripture, Christology, Metanoia, Pauline Theology, Psalms, Moral Theology, Franciscan Spirituality, Patristic Readings, Liberation Theology, Benedictine History, Monastic Life, Liturgy, Canon Law, Prophetic Vocation and the Sacraments. The instructors included: Mark Bultin, John Kennedy, John Fitzsimmons, Dermot Cox, Mark Attard, Ephrem Carr (St. Meinrad's Archabbey), Abbot Simon Tonini, Jean Louis Ska, Marcel Rooney, Sean Cannon, John O'Donnell, John Fuellenbach, James Downey, Charles Conroy and Philip Rosato. The religious orders and congregations varied considerably — not all were Benedictines.

(The following excerpt from his diary extends from Oct. 11 to Dec. 16. What seemed to be most surprising to everyone who attends the college is the large number of weddings taking place each day including Sundays. The exception seems to be the month of November when no weddings take place, possibly since that month is devoted to the deceased "Poor Souls." — Ed.)

Oct. 12 — Today we had our first experience with rain in Rome; we had our umbrellas along because it was cloudy, and just like that! it rained without warning. By the time we could get our umbrellas open we were wet.

Oct. 13 — This afternoon I slept for three hours because my biological clock

has not yet switched to Rome time.

Oct. 15 — We left for Subiaco . . . the bus ride was 1:15 minutes. We toured the upper monastery then had mass in the Sacrospeco, celebrated by Abbot Bonaventure. After mass we left for St. Scholastica Monastery. The library had old manuscripts and some of the first books printed in Italy.

Oct. 16 — After lunch four of us walked to St. John Lateran. It took us a whole hour to get there. The inside is something to see; I don't think they could build something like it today.

Oct. 17 — We left on foot to the Roman Forum . . . we toured the ruins for three hours; we should have had three days to see all of it.

Oct. 19 — This morning Father Sylvester (Vredegoor) celebrated mass in the English chapel of the Canadian Martyrs; I had the reading. (Oct. 19 is the feast of the Canadian Martyrs. — Ed)

Oct. 20 — We went to the Vatican this afternoon. . . . We saw the tomb of St. Peter and a number of pagan burial tombs made of what appears to be cement. The excavation started in 1939.

Oct. 21 — We left to St. Peter's . . . waited for ½ hour to get into the church. We had to go through a lot of security which slowed things down. We had a close-up seat . . . (but) the view was somewhat obscured by a large column.

Oct. 22 — I visited the church of St. Sabrina . . . it is supposed to be one of the oldest churches in Rome. The inside is simple and plain, with some art above the altar.

Oct. 27 — There are 10 or more Buddhist monks staying at Sant Anselm. I have never seen such security: police escorts; police are posted with machine guns at the gate of the monastery.

Oct. 28 — We went to Assisi today . . . toured the cathedral and St. Francis chapel and the place where he died. . . . Went to the convent of the Sisters of St. Brigitte. There is wine at every meal



except breakfast (in Italy). We saw the tomb of St. Francis and also the tomb of St. Clare; the body is exposed in a glass casket — it appears to be well preserved. We walked to St. Damian's, the church St. Francis rebuilt at the request of the crucifix. There were so many tourists we could hardly get in to see it. Our train back to Rome travelled at 130 kilometres per hour.

Nov. 1 — Father Sylvester and myself went to the Vatican and toured St. Peter's again. We took the elevator about half ways up and there were another 520 steps to go. I can tell you my chest was very sore by the time we reached the top; the view was very good — not a cloud in the sky . . . people look very small when looking down.

Nov. 2 — We had an hour and a half session with the abbot primate regarding the Abbot's Congress. It was very informative.

Nov. 3 — This morning I had my first experience with gypsy girls. They managed to get my wallet out of my coat pocket, which was zippered closed. One of our group, Br. Michael was right behind me. He said, "Watch, they are taking your watch!" I pulled myself free and they left. Then I felt in my pocket; the zipper was open, the wallet gone. We took after the girls. When they saw us they returned the wallet with 10,000 lire and eight bus tickets missing; they left the rest of the money. So much for that experience. They are very polite. After they gave the wallet back they said, "Thank you" in English!

Nov. 5 — Left for Norcia . . . toured the churches . . . then we had mass in the Church of St. Benedict . . . toured two more old churches and cemeteries . . . heavy dinner at the Benedictine sisters. On the way back from Norcia we toured an old Benedictine monastery that was built between the 7th and 10th century. There are no monks . . . it is only a tourist attraction.

Nov. 6 — The oranges are really turning color now. At St. Anselmo the steam heat is on the first time this winter. It is all hot water heating through the big

cast iron steam radiators.

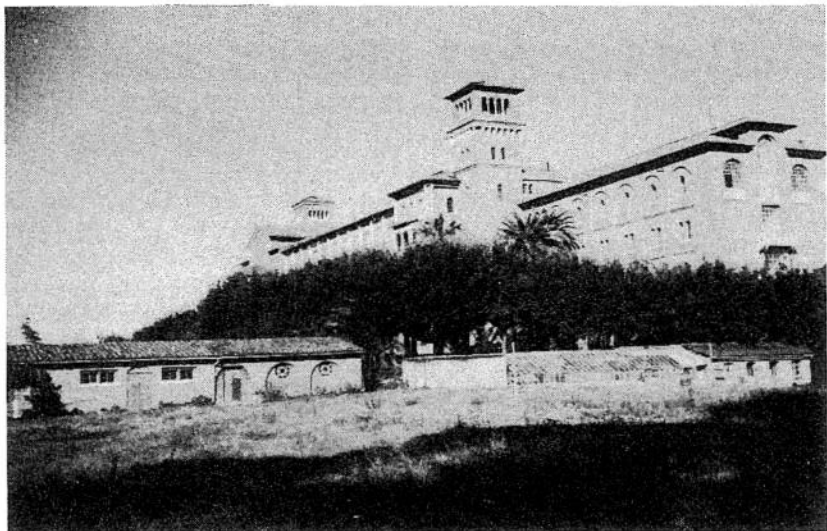
Nov. 9 — Toured St. Paul's Outside the Wall. It is a huge basilica. The inside of the church has 80 huge support pillars; two men can just reach around one. Received a letter from Father Albert (Ruetz) today. Also received a letter from Father Francis Lohmer requesting a papal blessing for Celine Wolsfeld for her 25th anniversary as a "priest housekeeper."

Nov. 11 — Today is the feast of the dedication of the church at St. Anselmo and it is celebrated as a holiday. We were in St. Peter's till about 10 a.m. then were asked to leave by the guards because the pope was to say mass at noon in St. Peter's. Then we went by bus to see the Pantheon which was built in the second century and was later used for a church by the early popes. The dome is similar to St. Peter's, built completely out of cement and volcanic rock. It is said that Michaelangelo at one time planned to move that dome and place it on St. Peter's; that is why the measurements are the same. From there we went to visit the Church of St. Agnes but it was locked . . . then to St. Ignatius. It has the most beautiful paintings I've seen. We also visited the Church of St. Matthew. It is a French church and has the paintings of the Call of Matthew by Our Lord, St. Matthew writing the Gospel and the Death of St. Matthew. After that we visited the Church of St. Catherine of Siena which has her tomb in the church.

Nov. 12 — We travelled by train to see the Mediterranean Sea . . . it cost 50 cents. It is the first time I saw or touched the sea . . . picked some sea shells, then we returned to Ostia and saw the ancient ruins of a Roman city. It dates back to 20 BC and was spread over an area of about 100 acres.

Nov. 18 — In Florence today . . . a two-hour train ride from Rome. First the Church of St. Lawrence with its beautiful paintings dating back to the time of Christopher Columbus. During the flood of 1966 the water level inside the church was about 10 feet and you can still see





The Benedictine College in Rome, Sant' Anselmo, taken by Br. Bernard Lange.

the water line inside the walls. Outside on the street they also show the water line on the buildings when the Arnon River overflowed. We visited the Church of the Holy Cross which was also very beautiful inside; then we toured parts of a former Benedictine monastery and courtyard. Next, the church of Dante — the place where he met his wife for the first time when she was 12 years old. We also saw the palace in which he lived, which is now a museum.

Nov. 19 — (Florence continued) We went to the Benedictine Monastery of Moniato on the Mountain which is now run by monks of the Olivetina Congregation. Parts of the monastery date back to the second century, which was at that time a pagan temple, and was later used by the early Christians for a church. In the 10th century a larger church was built over this small church; both are still in use and well preserved. Other parts of the monastery were built by the monks of Cluny in the 14th century. After being taken over by the Olivetines, the paintings of Benedictines on the walls in the church were changed from black (habits) to white. From there we went by bus to visit the

museum of David, which contains many of the works of Michelangelo. Later, we visited the church called the Duomo, a huge building erected before St. Peter's in Rome and was used for a model.

Nov. 20 — (Florence continued) We went on a tour of the Museum of Marco which contained many of the paintings of Angelico . . . beautiful in comparison to some other paintings there . . . then walked to the museum of Medici which was the former palace of Pitti, which is huge. They say to go through the entire museum could take several days. We toured the gardens instead; they are something to see. The gardens are built into the side of a large hill, which also has an outdoor theatre with various entertainments. Back to Rome. . . .

Nov. 23 — We had our last class on Moral Theology this afternoon. So far, all theologians do not have much use for (Cardinal) Ratzinger, mostly because of misunderstanding or of being misquoted out of context. The oranges are ripening fast; they can be picked right off the tree and eaten.

Nov. 26 — Monte Cassino; after mass

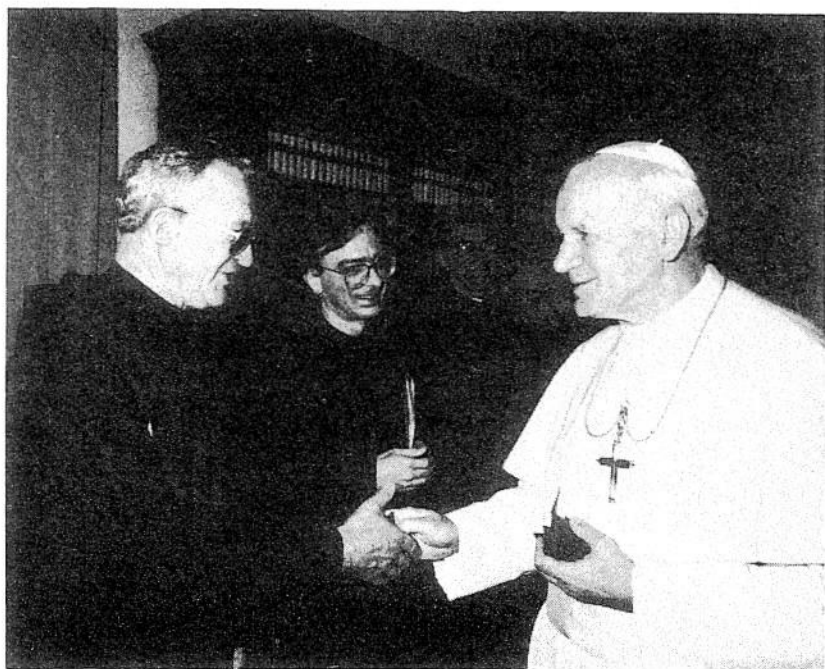
we had a guided tour through the entire church. Very little was left intact after the bombing (of WW II) except the tomb of St. Benedict and Scholastica. The whole monastery was rebuilt as close to the original as it was before the bombing. Some of the paintings are not yet completed. We toured the museum which is large and contains mainly old manuscripts that had been removed from the monastery before the destruction of 1944. Many items were donated by Rome such as old chalices, vestments, etc. They also have some army supplies, such as old machine guns, bomb shells (empty), helmets and other items that were found. We had a good dinner, then toured parts of the monastery and that ended the tour.

We left for the Cistercian monastery at Casarnari . . . an old monastery dating back to the 10th century, but was taken over by the Cistercians at the insistence of the pope a few centuries later. The building is in good

repair and is open to tourists who come there in throngs. They have a herbal pharmacy and also a gift shop in which they sell liqueur and chocolate. Also on the trip we saw many ancient ruins from the bus window, dating back to Roman time . . . one ruin was a stretch of Roman aqueduct; I had never visualized them that way.

Nov. 27 — The church this morning for lauds was cool because it is not heated. Being the first Sunday in Advent no organ was used but the singing went well, and as usual, I understood not a word. We had mass at 9:30 in Italian and Latin. At the Gregorian we heard American Rev. Raymond Brown speak on the genesis of Christ according to Matthew. The one-hour talk was very inspiring. I don't know how he found so much in these two chapters (1 and 2) to speak a whole hour.

Nov. 28 — This morning we attended mass with the Holy Father in his small chapel. There were in total about 40



Br. Bernard Lange is greeted by Pope John Paul at the Vatican.

people . . . we received communion from the Holy Father. After mass we had our pictures taken as we received the pope's blessing.

Dec. 1 — I am already counting the days till departure — another 16 days then Good-bye, Rome! November being over, the weddings are starting again at the abbey.

Dec. 3 — We left by tram (street car) to visit the Church of St. Lawrence Outside the Walls, where St. Lawrence was buried; it is one church that was damaged by a bomb. We also toured the catacombs beneath the ground. They are on three tiers and were found when the church was built.

Dec. 5 — We were invited to the English College for mass and lunch. Had a tour of the building and a great lunch; it is the first time we had roast beef since in Rome. We were back in time for our next session on Canon Law which is very interesting and instructive.

Dec. 7 — We left for Palazzola for a retreat (to return Friday). Palazzola was an old Trappist monastery built in the 12th century and taken over by the Franciscans in the 17th century, then bought by the English College in 1921 . . . used as a summer residence for students.

Dec. 8 — (on retreat) — We can see Lake Albana lying 500 feet below and across the lake there is Castel Gondolfo, the pope's summer residence. The lake is a volcanic crater and the mountain volcanic rock which is very porous is full of caves, which can be seen from this path. Some of these caves are used by tourists for picnics and the caves deeper in the mountain are used for cisterns where water is stored, coming from springs in the mountains. The meals here are part English and part Italian. We had our first oatmeal for breakfast in nine weeks; bacon and eggs are unheard of.

Dec. 10 — We toured the inside of St. Mary Major which is not as large as I expected and not nearly as richly decorated. It was built in stages; the first part was started in the year 490. Some

1,000 years later another part was built and in 1700 the entire church was enclosed with another shell. Then we visited another old church which dates back to the early centuries. I can't remember the name but it is only about 100 yards from St. Mary Major. It is supposed to have the pillar at which Christ was scourged; from what we saw it appears to be venerated as such.

Dec. 11 — I hope to be home next Sunday, God willing. I hope this is my last Sunday here. We are having mass in English this morning in the English chapel rather than in the church where everything is Italian. In the afternoon we spent some time visiting the Catacombs of St. Callisto. There are supposed to be up to 50,000 people buried there. We only saw a small part of it. It has five stories; we were in the second layer. They figure it was started in the year 200 BC. The English group held a farewell for our class; they served hot wine with mince pie and cake; it was delightful.

Dec. 12 — A short slide presentation of St. Clement's Church was given before we left by bus. Parts of the church are very old dating back to the fourth century, which was only discovered in the 19th century when some plaster fell off the wall and old arches were seen. Then excavation was begun and an old church was found beneath filled with rubble, apparently caused by an earthquake. When this was removed they found pillars, benches, altar, dating back to the fourth century, and beneath that they found a pagan temple. After this we toured the church of Moses which is near by. The sculpture is by Michelangelo; it is huge!

Dec. 13 — We had a farewell for Abbot Ralph of St. Benedict's Abbey, Kansas, who had to leave early because the time on the air ticket was run out. We received our photos with the Holy Father.

Dec. 14 — Three more days then "good-bye Rome." There is much talk about an airline strike being on this weekend. Most of the afternoon I spent reading the *Prairie Messenger*; the first issues



**The Lamb Youth Ministry group.**

(starting from Oct. 14) arrived in the last four days — there was some catching up to do.

Dec. 16 — One more day! There is a transit strike on this morning; all buses and subways stop. This makes Rome a lot quieter when the buses are not roaring below the hill. Our meals here have been different than what we were accustomed to. Breakfast: bread and coffee or warm milk. Dinner: pasta, vegetables, spinach nine times a week; and if they want to be real nice,

10 times a week. There also is some meat and wine and water. Supper: soup or pasta, spinach and potatoes with some meat, wine, water, raw fruit. How I'll miss it! I have packed most of my belongings already and am prepared for the 7:30 a.m. take-off by taxi to the airport. Amen.

*(According to the Abbey Chronicle, Br. Bernard arrived home from Rome on Saturday, Dec. 17 — as scheduled. — Ed.)*



**Fr. Cottingham with two Redemptorist novices from Edmonton.**

# On holiness as an Oblate of St. Benedict

(The following excerpt from Sister Dolores Dowling, OSB, *Instructions for Benedictine Oblates*, gives the reason why one might desire to become an Oblate of St. Benedict. — Father Albert Ruetz, Oblate Director.)

Why should one choose to become a Benedictine Oblate? Life is busy enough. . . . Why add more?

To get to the real answer below the surface ones is to find that we are seeking for meaning. After the age of 30, a great psychiatrist once said, all the questions in life are questions of meaning. In religious terms, they are spiritual questions. Our desire is to find more in life, to have our life really matter: in fact, to be holy.

"Holiness" is a word that tends to frighten us. "Me — holy? Well, hardly!"

But that's not the way the Bible looks at it. St. Paul says in no uncer-

tain terms that we are called to be saints. That's why God sent us his only son; why he set Jesus up as our source of mercy, our place of healing.

Remember the old Baltimore catechism and one of its first questions: "Why did God make you?" "He made you to know, love and serve him in this life and to be happy with him forever in the next." That answer is talking about holiness. Knowing, loving and serving God as best we can with all the strengths and weaknesses he has given us and being happy with him forever.

What we need to remember, to lean on, is the fact that God wants us to be holy. He keeps on calling us to holiness and he stands ready to help. He wants to give himself to us and he wants our response.

Being an Oblate gives us a community to back up our desire to live out the promise of baptism. We can't do it



Clara Freistadt of Carmel was enrolled as an Oblate candidate on Nov. 12, 1988. Joseph Daeger, Anne Daeger and Rose Wolsfeld made their Final Oblation as Oblates of St. Benedict on the same date. Fr. Albert Ruetz (left), is Oblate director for St. Peter's Abbey.



alone. God knows that we need help and he sees to it that we get it, usually from other people. Each of us is redeemed and each of us is sinful; we have to live with this tension, with our lack of wholeness, our realization of weakness and selfishness.

But we are not left alone. We have a community. In choosing to become an Oblate we choose a group to help us



Abbot Jerome Weber with Jeanne Meurer of Edmonton who was enrolled as an Oblate candidate on Oct. 9, 1988.

in our striving. Our strength will help them, just as they will help us in our weakness. Baptism demands that we share in Christ's love for his world and his people. However small and humble our part may be, we do have a part in redemption.

Holiness is not a rejection of the world, but a way of giving witness to God's saving action in this world. "All Christians," says the document on the Church, "are most intimately united with the life and mission of Christ" (34). That is why Jesus identified himself with us as his people during his own earthly life. He participated in the ordinariness of life, allowing himself to be baptized to show this identification. His baptism was the first public step in his ministry.

Our baptism was the first step in our growth in faith and personal holiness.

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## REST IN PEACE

Mrs. Rose Kasun, Oblate from Cudworth, who died December 19, 1988.

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# Abbacy mission report

*By Bernard Stauber, OSB*

Besides having the Maceio Mission Team we also are co-operating in the Saskatoon, Uniao dos Palmares Mission Team. I've been part of the mission team since 1973, when Sister Clare Novocosky, OSU, and I went down to Brazil. For the first few years I worked in Maceio and from 1976 to 1980 I worked in a country parish, Colonia Leopoldina. I had a fairly serious car accident in 1980 and came home to recuperate. Then in 1982 to the present I've been doing missionary work together with the Saskatoon team in Uniao dos Palmares.

That's a good way to put it, because I have been doing missionary work in neighboring parishes ever since I've been with the Saskatoon team. Since our team consists of three priests and five sisters we do have a certain freedom of movement. In my time in Uniao I've worked on a regular basis in a missionary capacity in four parishes. My work was possible because of the home base working together and support of the Uniao team. That is the idea of working together with the Saskatoon team to enable us to serve other needy parishes in the diocese. At the same time there is the needed mutual support.

Last year Father Emile April had his sabbatical year so I was basically working in Uniao with Father Don MacGillivray and the sisters. That meant I did more work with the farmers than normal because I assumed a good deal of Father Emile's work. Besides that I worked hardest at my part in the community of St. Sebastian where the 6,000 or more residents were working to have their church "with a tower" built. We started in November of 1987 and it's been in use since about August 1988.

One major item still to finish is outside plastering. Actually it is already stuccoed so there is no rush. Besides

the finishing touches to the building, the major task of community growth remains. When I get back that's going to be a major concern of mine: facilitating community. Mostly it means visiting and being present in the community more. An interesting part of the church construction is that actual money spent is around \$8,000—\$2,000 each from Muenster and Saskatoon and \$1,000 from the community and \$3,000 from the salary and other payments I had received since being in Uniao.

I talked about working with the farmers more. It meant weekly visits to various communities and monthly meetings with representatives. A major concern for a number of years now is with a group of 75 renting families who are on the verge of getting title to the land. The problem is that they most certainly will only get title if they struggle wisely. Father Lawrence in his letters mentioned that he thinks it's close now. They've been "encamped" in front of the federal land reform office for months to pressure their cause.

What has being missionary to do with St. Peter's? I feel it is part of a vital faith and Christian love community to share its life with other communities, especially those in most need. To go out in mission following the Spirit's leading is a creative tension. To be specific, I'd say our mission is to facilitate the growth of small Christian communities at home and abroad. The question of founding a specific monastic community in Brazil is still open, but it seems remote. At the moment we should continue what we are doing to facilitate the local growing faith communities. Alagoas has one priest to 30,000 faithful. That's the greatest need in all of Brazil. To do some small part in the building of small church communities to meet this pastoral need is essentially mission.

# Sixty years at St. Peter's Press

By Br. Vincent Regnier

Br. Dominic Distel will be celebrating 60 years with St. Peter's Press on March 21, 1989. This is something very few people today would even consider possible. When asked how he persevered with such dedication for so long, he replies, "It was easy because I enjoyed the work." It is so difficult to imagine the strength and stability of character which this statement implies.

Many people have come and gone from the press as Br. Dominic recalls. One he remembers was Father Gregory (Gasser), the man who used to eat the paste which was cooked in the kitchen

and used as glue in the print shop. Father Gregory seemed to prefer it as a bit of a snack. One might question what was served for meals in those days. Anyway, Bro. Dominic suggests that this may have been the carcinogenic substance which "helped him along." Throughout most of his years Br. Dominic worked alongside his friend Br. Conrad Abs whose capacity for silence was evident even in his younger days. These people and many others were and are an important part of Br. Dominic's life at the press; they were "good years."

Much has been written on Br. Dominic's life already, but not much on his character. During this year's Christmas festivities Br. Dominic decided he needed a refill of his drink; sitting on one side of him was one of the workers. "How old are you?", inquired Br. Dominic with a straight face. "Sixty-three," was the reply. Then, saying with a smile, "A mere child; you may get me another drink."

Br. Dominic's humour is simple and straightforward. This is also the perception one gets of his personality; a man without a lot of complexities, great sincerity and truly aware of others.

Finally, Br. Dominic writes of his own beginnings at St. Peter's Abbey. The reader should gain more insight into the author and be aware of the promise made to him by the abbot, a promise which he knows was fulfilled in a large part by the 60 years with the press.

"It was in fall 1922 after my uncle who was farming in Marysburg, hath sent me the necessary papers from the Canadian immigration office to be admitted to Canada. I made my final decision to go to the Benedictines in



Brother Dominic Distel



The 1922 passport photo of Anthony Distel, Brother Dominic, OSB.

Muenster. My uncle let me know all about them and hath offered me a college education. Being late in coming to Muenster mein uncle offered me a course for next year 1923. But in July 1923 a heavy hailstorm destroyed my uncle's harvest to the last bushel of grain. No money left for a college course.

"We have no contract with the Lord allowing us to call him to account or force him to explain. His wisdom is unfathomable and his decisions are beyond our comprehension.

"On such a day I visited Abbot Severin Gertken. Father Abbot advised me to join the brothers of St. Peter's Abbey.

"The promise I can give you: 'You will never regret having joined the monks of St. Peter's.' "

(Anthony Distel was born in Hochemmingen, Baden, Germany on All Saints Day, Nov. 1, 1905. He came to Canada in 1922 and worked on his uncle's farm until he joined the Benedictines on Dec. 28, 1928 at which time he was given the name Dominic. On July 8, 1930 Br. Dominic made simple profession as a Benedictine monk. At 83 Br. Dominic is retired but still faithfully rings a bell to call the monks to prayer, a joy he began 57 years ago. — Ed)

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Oblate Director  
Fr. Albert Ruetz, OSB  
St. Peter's Abbey,  
Muenster, Sask.  
S0K 2Y0

# News from the novitiate

There are once again three novices at St. Peter's. Br. Vincent Regnier, Br. Demetrius Wasylyniuk and Br. Denis Fortin. Br. Denis was reinvested on

Dec. 15, 1988.

The varied activities for the novices includes regular classes: The Rule of St. Benedict with Abbot Jerome Web-



The 1988 Christmas creche prepared by the novices.

er, Liturgy and Vows with Father Peter Novacosky, Monastic History with Father Maurice Weber and Scripture with Father James Gray. Joining us in the study of Scripture through the Journey Program are juniors, Brs. Gerald Moran and Randy Senecal.

Other activities range from working in the barns, to the press and library. We try our best with the talents we have. Some of us have farm backgrounds and some city backgrounds. This makes the different work activities challenging and surprising at times.

Divine Office provides the third major area of activities for us, as we take our turn as psalm readers, cantors and reading Scripture. We also assist at mass both as servers and readers.

During the Christmas season, as part of the community, we were invited to St. Elizabeth's Convent in Humboldt. The day started with noon-day praise, followed by lunch, while the afternoon was spent visiting and trying out some card and dice games. Father Werner Renneberg was much more successful

at dice than the novices.

On Dec. 29 here was a gathering for people in formation from the Benedictine, Ursuline and Elizabethan communities at the Ursuline Convent at Bruno. A great supper was served, followed by Vespers. The rest of the evening was taken up by different card games and an excellent slide presentation by Sister Juliana Weber. Overall our holidays during Christmas were full of activities.

We are now back to the regular schedule. We are always pleased to meet people from the abbacy and other places. Our special enjoyment is our visits to the neighboring parishes and pastors. Hopefully, we will have the opportunity to visit more parishes in the abbacy. Invitations are welcome.

*(The gratitude of the community goes out to the novices for the many forms of support which they contribute to the operation of our monastery. They very often fill in when a professed monk is away at school — for example the sacristy, the infirmary and "the whole bit." — Ed)*

## Farm report

By Br. Bernard Lange, OSB

It's time again to write a few words about the activities on the farm.

We are in the midst of winter which is a good time to talk about farming but not for working on the land; but as the old saying goes, "January comes, January goes."

I spent the first part of the winter in Rome. I was of the impression that I could do without snow for one winter. After spending 10 weeks in Rome, where snow is rare but smog is everyone's dish every day, my first impression soon left me. Then my feelings changed to "Let me have the snow and they can have their smog."

It's a sure sign that spring will come once more when seed catalogues start appearing in the mail box. When one studies the beauty of the flower selec-

tion and the delicious cobs of corn pictured so beautifully it makes any brand taste good. Even spinach, which gave Popeye those large muscles, looks appetizing when pictured in the catalogue in January.

Br. Basil, who is assistant gardener, already knows the inside of a few seed catalogues like the bottom of his foot and is raring to give it his best for another year.

Working with the soil let's practice faith, hope and charity.

In spring we plant in faith because there are so many unknowns.

Then we hope the good Lord will send rain to sustain the plants.

And in charity we share with those in need.



# The abbey church

By Andrew Britz, OSB

Usually an abbey church is one of the first things a group of monks build when they establish a new abbey. The monk's central work is to seek and praise God; all his other activity should flow from that.

Monks like to symbolize this centrality of worship by placing the abbey church at the heart of their complex of buildings. Whenever a guest arrives for the first time on an abbey's ground, the architecture of the place should tell the guest what life in a monastery is all about.

There were many reasons historically why the monks of St. Peter's never built their church. In the beginning they were situated right beside the cathedral and had ready access to this beautiful building. The monks in 1921 moved to the present location. It was the early '20s, a time of great optimism. The plans the monks had for the present locale now boggle one's mind — the church planned would make Michael Hall (the old college building) pale into ordinariness.

With the Depression the monks paid for Michael Hall several times over and faced the possibility of bankruptcy. It would be many years before the monks had courage to start building again. In the late '50s and early '60s plans again included an abbey church. But again the monks put their own needs last. Money was collected in the abbacy for the building program, and the monks felt the school should come first.

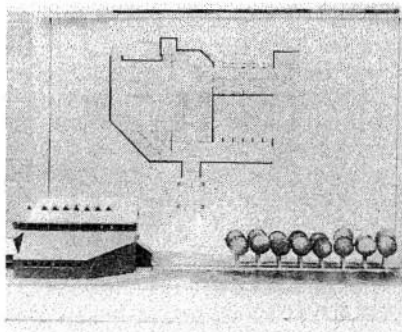
Throughout Abbot Jerome's tenure as our leader, he has reminded us of the need for an abbey church. Two years ago he again brought up the matter in chapter and asked each monk to speak his mind. A substantial majority spoke in favor of building a church.

And so as with most things in the modern church, a committee was struck and countless questionnaires and discussions followed. It is one thing to get

a group of monks to decide to build a church; it is quite another to get them to agree on a specific model — there are a million variables on which to have another community discussion!

The monks asked a world-renowned architect from Winnipeg, Etienne Gaboury, to help them plan the church. While the monks have discussed in great detail many different ideas about the shape and function of the church, virtually every monk wants the church to be as beautiful as our means dictate. And dictate they do.

Our funds for the church are limited. To partially overcome this unrelenting fact, the church is planned so that the monks can do as much of it themselves. We came to an agreement as to the model at a chapter vote on



A model of the proposed Abbey church.

Feb. 9. That should enable us to get an early start this spring and have the basic structure enclosed before freeze-up. The monks would then finish it as time and money were available.

Should anyone wish to help the monks build their church, four special funds were set up: a general church fund, a bell and bell tower fund, a fund for stained-glass windows and a fund for a pipe organ. Contributions can be sent to the Church Building Committee at the abbey.



The monks are trying to make the most of their resources. For instance, the organists are looking for a second-hand pipe organ that can be rebuilt into a beautiful instrument. Brother William Thurmeier has rebuilt organs in the past and we plan on putting his expertise to work.

More about the particular features of the church will be written in the next newsletter. Let it suffice here to say that the architect has tried to fully integrate the church into our existing buildings. In other words, it will be — at least at first sight — rather straightforward in design. It will be red brick as are all the other principal buildings here.

Stained-glass windows will play a major role in giving character to the building's interior. There is a large band on stained glass that runs all along the east, south and west walls. As the morning light (Lauds) and evening light (Vespers) plays a significant role

in shaping the daily round of monastic prayer, so the monks hope the moving of the sun from morning to evening will strongly effect the atmosphere of their place of worship.



A Multicultural Youth Forum participant from the Ukraine, U.S.S.R.



Participants in the Multicultural Youth Forum from Ile-a-la-Crosse.

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