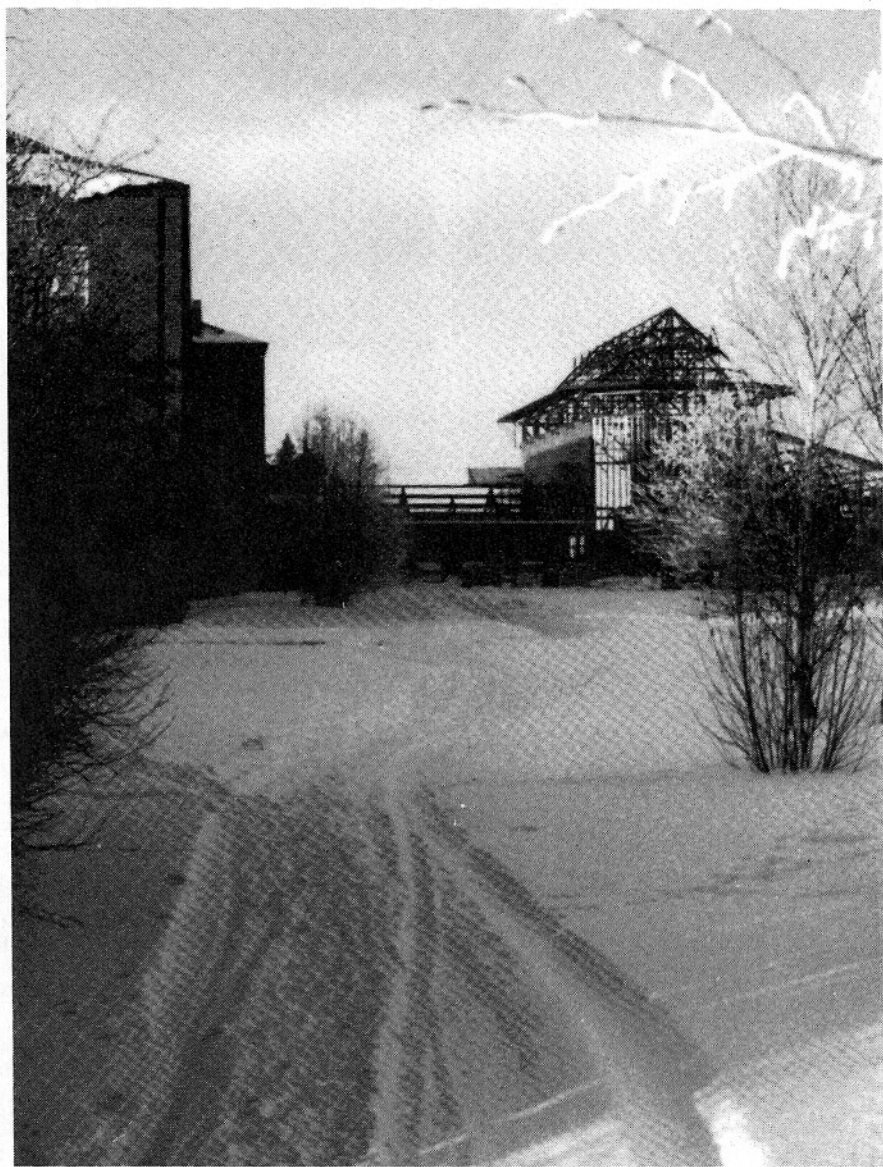


ST. PETER'S ABBEY

newsletter



Vol. 13, No. 2 Winter 1990



Abbot Jerome's report

Fr. Martin and I went to Winnipeg to be present at the 25th anniversary of ordination as a bishop of Archbishop A. Haccault of St. Boniface on Sept. 8. We enjoyed the hospitality of our Benedictine Sisters at St. Benedict's Priory for a few days.

I attended the annual convention of the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan in Regina Sept. 17-18. It was consoling to see so many men and women dedicated to health care.

St. Thomas More College had a farewell banquet to honor its former president, Fr. Hanrahan, on Sept. 30. I was glad to attend because Fr. Hanrahan had helped us at our college by teaching a course in history. He also was active in the charismatics in Saskatchewan.

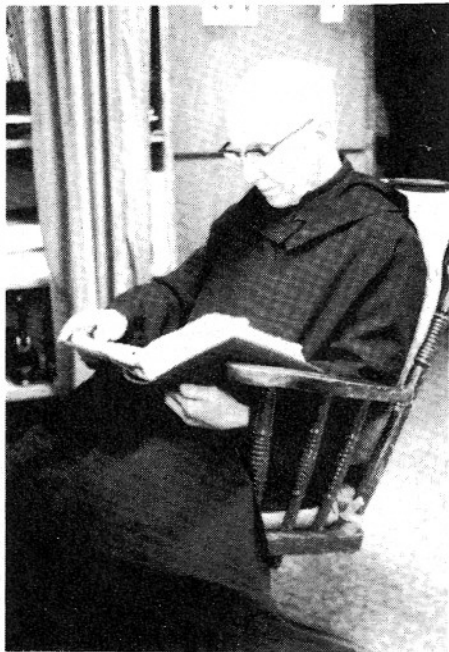
The annual meeting of the CCCB took place in Ottawa Oct. 23-28. During this week I joined in celebrating the 100th anniversary of St. Paul's University conducted by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. I took out one day before the meeting to spend with my brother Peter and his family in Barrie, Ont.

On Nov. 4 I began my journey to Canmore, Alta., west of Calgary, by car. En route and on my return I stopped to visit the Sisters of St. Elizabeth at the hospital in Macklin. I began teaching the three-week survey course on church history in Canmore on Nov. 6. While there I had time to visit my sister Bernadette and her family in Calgary, and the sisters of St. Elizabeth, at the Retreat Centre in Cochrane. Through the courtesy of Kevin Murphy, a lawyer, and a former student of St. Peter's, I was able to see

a hockey game between Calgary and Los Angeles.

The Charter Night of the 4th degree K of C, the Severin Council, was held at Lake Lenore on Dec. 2. After the mass I enjoyed the delicious banquet there.

On Dec. 21 I offered Holy Mass for the children of St. Augustine's School in the new church which was blessed on Oct. 29.



Abbot Jerome Weber is an avid devotee of the Sacred Scriptures.

**WHEN YOU HEAR
GOD'S VOICE TODAY,
HARDEN NOT YOUR HEART!**

Vocations Are Everybody's Business.

ST. PETER'S ABBEY NEWSLETTER

Published by the Benedictine community of St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Saskatchewan, S0K 2Y0, three times a year: February, June and October. Deadline: the 15th of the previous month.

Editor: Gerald Moran, OSB

Regular contributors: Abbot Jerome Weber, OSB; Peter Novacosky, OSB; Albert Ruetz, OSB; Bernard Lange, OSB; Maurice Weber, OSB

Photo credits: Photos by Moran, Lange, Babych Arturo Mari, Beck, Yaskowich and PM.

Logo designed by Kurt Van Kuren, OSB.

Fr. Philip's triannual vacation

Father Philip Loehr had missed only two Sunday services in the parishes during the three years since May 1986. Parishioners thought they deserved better than that! He finally managed to be away for two Sundays in September.

He spent those two Sundays, Sept. 17 and 24, 1989, plus the week in-between, renewing acquaintances at the Abbey of St.-Benoit-du-Lac on Lake Memphremagog in the eastern townships of Quebec. On the way there he looked up friends in Ottawa, including Bede Hubbard, a former editor of the *Prairie Messenger* and now a book editor for Novalis, and Jesuit Father Bill Ryan, director of the office of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and a close friend since 1968.

While at St. Benoit Father Philip took the opportunity of studying the 96-page brief of Gerard Drainville, bishop of Amos in northwest Quebec,

on "Agriculture in Contemporary Quebec." That document proved to be excellent resource material for the articles on Saskatchewan agriculture which Fr. Philip was planning for the *Prairie Messenger*. The abbey in Quebec, with French going on around him, was the perfect setting for the study of Bishop Drainville's brief, which is as yet available only in French.

The trip to and from Quebec was made in the little French stationwagon. Fr. Philip camped in it four times enroute each time at 24-hour truck stops in Ontario: at Nipigon and Blind River on the way down, at Cochrane and Ignace on the way back. He also stopped over at St. Benedict Priory in Winnipeg coming and going. Gasoline costs for the trip were \$181, a far cry from the days of cheap gas in the 1970s when \$40 worth of gasoline would bring the car to Ottawa or Toronto and back.



Fr. Philip Loehr and his "le car" at St. Benoit-du-Lac, a Benedictine abbey in Quebec. This photo was taken by Jacques Cote, OSB, a friend of Fr. Philip's.

A sabbatical in Rome

By Fr. Peter Novecosky

I left St. Peter's Abbey Oct. 8 for a three-month sabbatical in Rome. I took the same theology renewal program at the international Benedictine Abbey of Sant' Anselmo in Rome that Bro. Bernard and Fr. Sylvester took a year ago. It has the reputation in Rome of being one of the better renewal programs. A lot of the things I could say about the program would be a repeat of what Bro. Bernard wrote in the newsletter a year ago so I will try to look at other aspects.

As far as the courses went, we had class every morning and afternoon — from 4 hours to 6 hours a day. The classes covered the general field of theology, from Scripture (3 different classes) to liturgy, canon law, moral theology, ecumenism, monastic life, plus more. What classes were taught depended a great deal on what professors were available to teach. The profs were drawn from the various graduate schools of theology in Rome and were of very high quality, I thought. All the classes were taught in English. There were 12 in our group — two from England, one from India, one from Canada and eight from the U.S.

We fitted into the group of 120 or so monks at Sant' Anselmo. They come from around the world to study in Rome. To accommodate the variety of languages, the common language of the house is Italian. All the philosophy and theology courses are taught in Italian, except for ours. Some of the monks only reside at Sant' Anselmo; they take their classes at other graduate schools in Rome — which means walking or taking a bus. And some of the courses offered at Sant' Anselmo, like the liturgy graduate program or the monastic studies program, attract students from outside Sant' Anselmo. So it's not unusual to see both men and women, monks and laypeople, walking down the halls of Sant' Anselmo.

The monks who live at Sant' An-

selmo are divided into four basic language groups, for socializing and for praying the Office together: Italian, English, German and French. There is actually a fifth language for liturgy — Latin!

The trip to Rome was my first one to Europe, so there were lots of new things to become accustomed to: the crowded streets with cars parked on the sidewalks, the high buildings, the narrow streets, the Latin culture, open-air markets, the Italian lire, crowded buses, ancient buildings and lots of scaffolding. And the big event in Rome everyone is looking forward to — the World Soccer Cup in the summer of 1990.

I was surprised how easily a person could adapt to a different schedule. Dinner is taken at 1 p.m. and supper is at 8 p.m. This didn't cause me as much trouble as I had expected. And of course the daily siesta after dinner was no trouble at all!

One of the things I had looked forward to in Rome was to become acquainted with some of our Western history and culture. So when I unexpectedly came face to face with the ancient Roman colosseum on my trip into Rome from the airport, it was quite overwhelming.

We were lucky in our course to have an excellent art historian as our tour guide. Sister Jean Rae took us on weekly tours not only to St. Peter's and other churches but also to many of the ancient buildings in Rome. It was quite a feeling to stand in the old Roman Forum — the place from which the Roman emperors controlled much of the known world 2,000 years ago. It was also awe-inspiring to see, stand beside and touch buildings that were built 2,000 years ago: the aqueducts, the colosseum, the pantheon. And it was also a great thrill to see some of the art masterpieces created by Michaelangelo and other artists three to four hun-



Fr. Mark Butlin, OSB, program director, introduces Fr. Peter Novecosky to Pope John Paul II, after the renewal program group concelebrated mass in the pope's private chapel, Nov. 25, 1989. In the background is Fr. Edmund Hatton, OSB, of Ampleforth Abbey, England, a classmate of Cardinal Basil Hume.

dred years ago or to stand in the same church where they worked and prayed.

Our group also had excursions outside of Rome. We visited places of interest to Benedictines: Subiaco, where St. Benedict was born; Norcia, where St. Benedict was a hermit for three years; and finally Montecassino, where St. Benedict built his monastery. It was a good reminder of the frailty of any human project to recall that 50 years after St. Benedict's death the monastery of Montecassino was totally destroyed and was not rebuilt for over 200 years! That was only one of several times the monastery was destroyed and had to be rebuilt.

Other excursions of note were weekend visits to Assisi and to Florence. Assisi is famous as the place where St. Francis began his good work and we visited all the places associated with him. Florence is famous as the art centre of Italy during the renaissance and there are many famous art pieces that can be seen there.

My trip ended on a pleasant note too. Lawrence and Donna Novecosky, my nephew and niece, visited me after classes were finished in mid-December. We spent 10 good days in Rome touring the highlights. Then we travelled to Athens in Greece and Zagreb in Yugoslavia. I left them there while I journeyed on to Vienna. After nine days I was back in Rome and ready to fly back to Canada — to arrive back home exactly three months after I had left.

Letter

By Bro. Kurt Van Kuren

This is the long-awaited earthquake letter! Actually, it is more like the long-awaited earthquake package.

I've included a reprint of the original San Francisco Chronicle, earthquake editor, along with an excerpt from my hometown newspaper. Don't worry — I haven't been ordained "in absentia" or "in extremis". It is just

the usual miscommunication that has me listed as a Benedictine priest!

Other than the earthquake, life at the institute is quite good. I have been elected the student representative to the budget committee (by default, actually) and am now learning the in's and out's of the institute's finance and development picture. This should prove

quite a useful preparation for work at the college.

Other than that, the only other excitement for me has been to co-author a series of articles on emerging spiritual movements in the Bay area (for the *Prairie Messenger*). I hope they will receive Fr. Andrew's "imprimatur"! Expect them in the mail soon.

Abbey aged and infirm

By Maurice Weber, OSB (Fr. Maurice is Infirmarian for the abbey)

We do not really appreciate a gift or ability until we are in danger of losing it. This is the case with our hearing, eyesight or general health, or even life itself. This lesson has been brought home strongly to me as I battle with a form of liver cancer and find myself unable to function in a lot of situations that appeared to be so easy to handle in the past. Now it seems to take a herculean effort just to get to public prayer with the community or celebrate the eucharist with them.

I am inspired by the good examples of monks around me and in particular

by some of the old ones who are experiencing health problems as well. They may seem to be in good shape exteriorly but the physical body does not function as well as it used to. It is like a four-cylinder motor actually hitting on only three cylinders. It looks good by mere appearance but the drive and ability are just not there anymore.

Fr. Matthew Michel is 93 years old and continues to surprise us with his daily walks through the monastery and guestwing and his interest in such things as the construction of the abbey church. He is in good health for his age and humorously chides Frs. Philip and Alfred for their interest in doing crossword puzzles.

Frs. Francis Lohmer and Xavier Benning are still active in their respective parishes of St. Scholastica and St. Gertrude as they live through their 87th and 88th years. It is amazing to note their drive and vitality as well as their daily fidelity to prayer. Fr. Norbert, now 79, seems to be thriving and is ever ready to help Fr. Matthew, Br. John or others. One wonders how he can keep up on the small food intake in his diet.

Bro. Dominic, 84, still keeps up his walks when the weather is warm and visits the press to bring us the latest *Prairie Messengers*. He has a ready smile and still backs the Montreal Canadians in hockey. Bro. Gregory, also 84, likes to visit the power house and work with electrical fixtures. He acts as a guide for Bro. John, 82, who has failing eyesight.

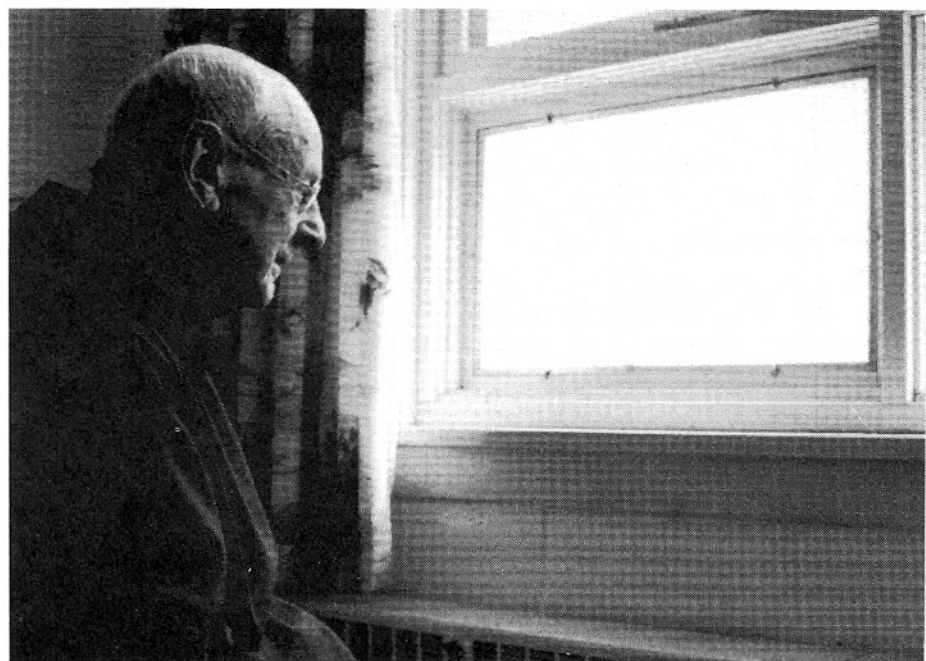
Bro. John has been having some digestive tract problems and finds it



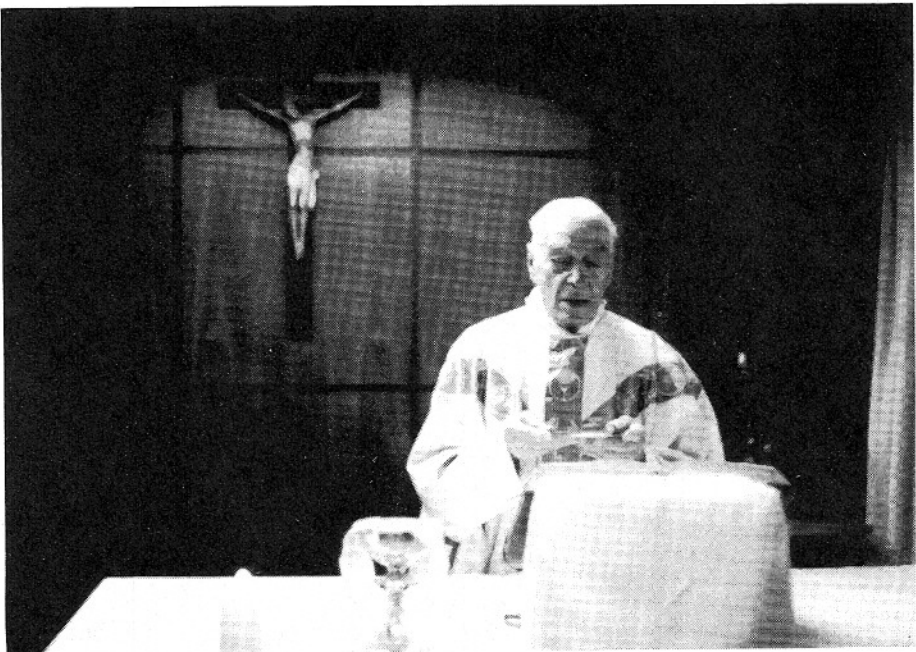
Fr. Norbert Schwinghammer reads to Br. John Brodner, who is almost blind, on a daily basis. Fr. Norbert performs many like services to the elderly.



Bro. Dominic Distel follows the progress on the abbey church in one of the guest parlors.



Fr. Xavier Benning is equally interested in the abbey church building. Between caring for the honey and his parish of St. Gertrude's, Fr. Xavier checks the progress several times a day.



Fr. Mathew Michel, assisted by Fr. Norbert, takes great pride in being able to say his private mass almost daily — in the abbot's chapel.

hard to eat enough to keep up his weight to about 135 pounds. Bro. Conrad, 84, is still working daily in the mailing department of the *Prairie Messenger*, mustering up more energy than I have at the best of times. Unfortunately his hearing ability has deteriorated and he finds it difficult to join the common prayers of the monks.

Other monks have their usual aches and pains and sicknesses but, on the whole, our community remains relatively healthy. I seem to be one of the exceptions. My battle with a form of liver cancer can be very disheartening at times when it comes to living with discomfort and pain, and a constant feeling of being sick.

I had discontinued chemotherapy treatments last April and have been taking two needles per day of a hormone called Sandostatin. My last liver scan in December showed no improvement, but it also indicated no real progress of the cancer. This leaves me with about 70 per cent good liver and 30 per cent deteriorated liver.

Recently more fluid has been collecting about the liver cavity and Dr. Junk withdrew three litres of fluid. I had thought that I was gaining back a bit of the weight to make up for the 50 pounds I had lost, but the drainage session left me with seven pounds less. I don't know why the fluid is collecting, but it seems the liver can't get rid of these juices formed.

I have learned a lot since recognizing my cancer condition a year ago. This situation has made me face the more important things in life and see my existence in a clearer perspective. I believe this experience has taught me a great deal and given me insights that would never have come otherwise. It has shown me the fragility of my human health and life. This has been a time of grace where I am challenged to practice perseverance and patience.

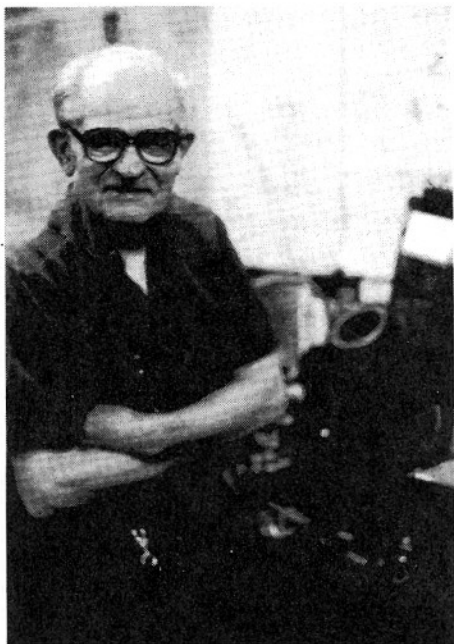
One thinks that virtue has been acquired until the going gets tough and human weakness shows through impatience, feeling sorry for oneself, or just wanting to give up. Unfortunately I

have to resort to the use of morphine pills when pain and discomfort seem too pressing, but this might be taken as one of God's gifts to help us, although it must be treated carefully.

I know that a lot of people have shown their love and have been praying for my well-being. I feel that areas of my life have been healed and for this I am grateful. However, we still hope for the cure on the physical level. When I see others go through life with much more difficult problems it makes me humble and wary of my own self-centredness. Meanwhile I have learned to appreciate more just being rather than doing, pausing in wonder rather than rushing about.

This has been a wonderful year insofar as I witnessed to the beauties of nature unfolding daily as I remain free of any taxing duties in the school or monastery. Also, I have learned to appreciate sickness in others and have been gifted to help about half-a-dozen friends who passed away with cancer.

It has been said that cancer is a gift to the person who has everything. As Dr. Bernie Siegel notes, we usually only change when forced to do so and this experience has been a good schooling for me. Thus I want to learn more how to appreciate God's gifts and particularly those of my good confreres and



Br. Conrad Abs in the press circulation department — not quite retired.

friends who make life so much more fulfilling and meaningful.

I once wrote a thesis on Chapter 72 of the Rule of St. Benedict. It describes how the monk is to practice good zeal, and this condition gives me ample opportunity to practice good zeal as well as to experience it from others.

St. Peter's Press report

The last three months of 1989 were busy ones at St. Peter's Press. Fr. Peter Novecosky, manager, was away on sabbatical. Loretta Dauk, a long-time employee, very capably took over as acting manager. Taking over most of her work in the circulation department of the Prairie Messenger was Ben Nickel, a candidate at the abbey.

Everyone on staff pitched in, as usual, to keep the various printing jobs on schedule, as well as to keep up the weekly schedule of editing and printing the Prairie Messenger. Editor-in-chief Fr. Andrew Britz, in addition to keeping up with the weekly production of the Prairie Messenger, was preoccu-

pled with overseeing the abbey church construction.

The staff has remained quite stable over the past year. However, some changes have taken place. Emily Greter took a leave of absence during the summer and Christy Waldner took over the proofreading job. Donna Rauckman rejoined the staff, after a year's absence, for part-time work in the darkroom.

Another change takes place early in the new year. At the end of February Loretta Dauk will be leaving the press, and the area, as the family moves to Calgary. Part of her work will be taken over by Rose Marie Strueby. Coming

on staff for part-time work is Kathy Classen of Muenster.

Computers continue to play an ever greater role in the operations of the press and Prairie Messenger. They not only make the work more efficient but they also make it more fun! Who says work can't be fun? A new IBM-compatible computer has made the gathering of news via satellite quite a simple matter — as long as the equipment works. We were without CNS news for two weeks in January when an electronic box went on the blink and a new one had to be shipped in from Washington, D.C.

The same computer is being used for keeping the books up to date. Once

Rose Marie has time to catch up on the backlog, she will be able to speed up the accounting procedures — and enjoy doing the books at the same time!

More and more of the circulation list of the Prairie Messenger is being entered on the computer. About 95 per cent of the names are now on the computer, thanks in large part to Ben Nickel. Bro. Conrad, who has given admirable and dependable service for over 50 years, is beginning to slow down a bit this past year. Though "only 84," he still continues to put in a full day of work at the press each day and is out early whenever it snows, to clear off the sidewalks before the staff arrives.

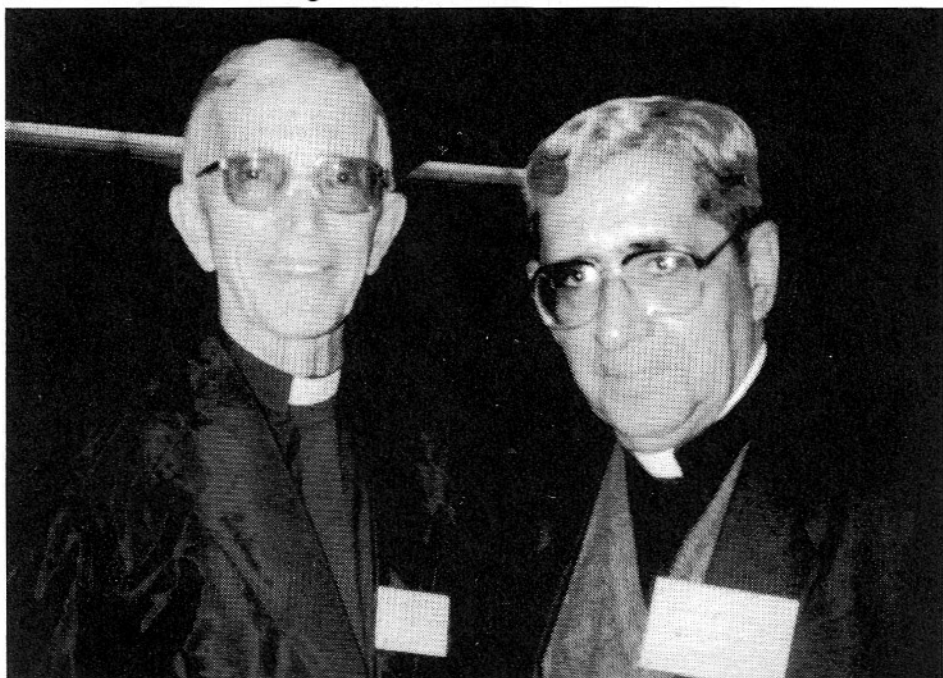


Fr. Peter Novocosky and Loretta Dauk in the general manager's office at St. Peter's Press. Loretta was acting manager during Fr. Peter's absence.

*"... that in all things God may
be glorified."*

-Benedictine Motto

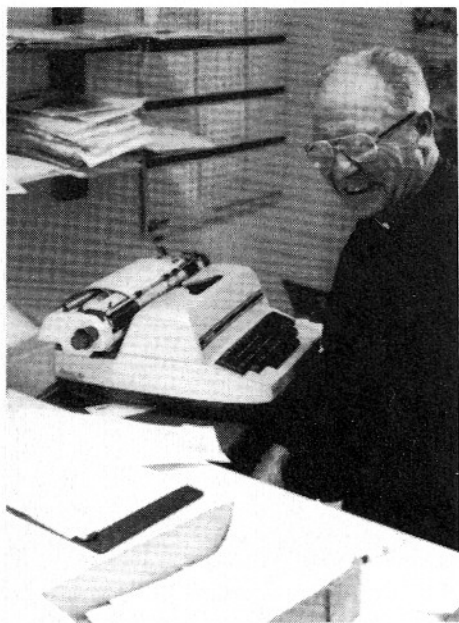
Abbey Photo Journal



Fr. Don MacGillivray and Archbishop Edvaldo of Maceio, Brazil, paid a visit to the abbey on Nov. 3, accompanied by Bishop James Mahoney. Frs. Sylvester Vredegoor and Bernard Stauber from St. Peter's Abbey serve in the Maceio Archdiocese.



Br. Gregory Brodner, besides supervising the water purifying plant, also assists in advising the younger monks with his extensive expertise.



Fr. Martin Brodner preparing the Sunday bulletin for St. Peter's Parish.



Two errors in the last issue of the Abbey Newsletter: the photo above was up-side-down, really. Also, credit for the Frank and Josephine Miller photo taken in the gym foyer should go to their grand-daughter, Donna Beck, the editor's niece.



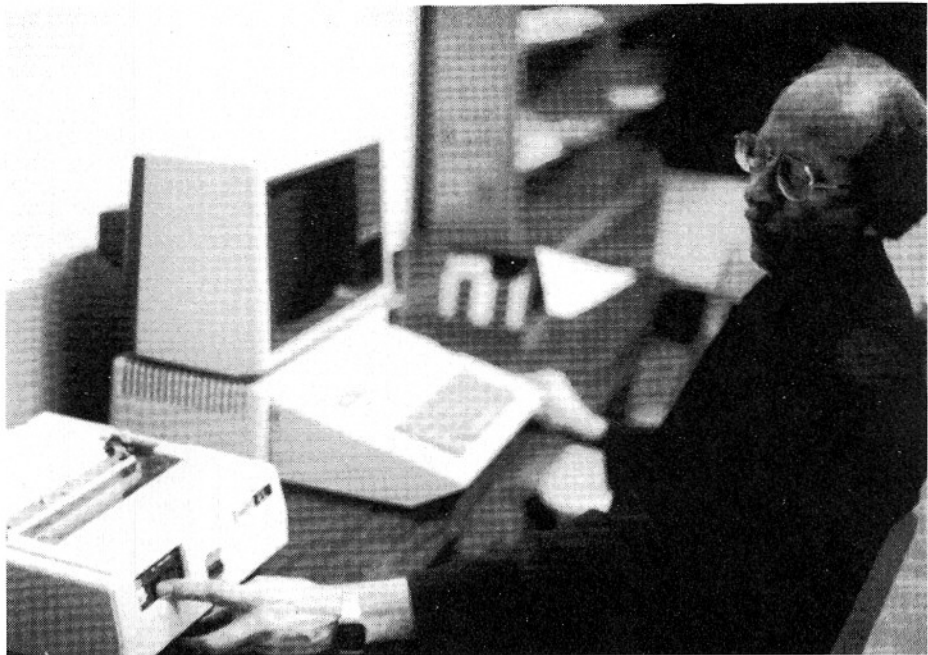
Visitors for last August were: Fr. Terrence Kardong of Assumption Abbey, North Dakota, and Abbot Hugh Anderson of St. Procopius Abbey, Illinois. This picture with Abbot Jerome was too late for the last newsletter.



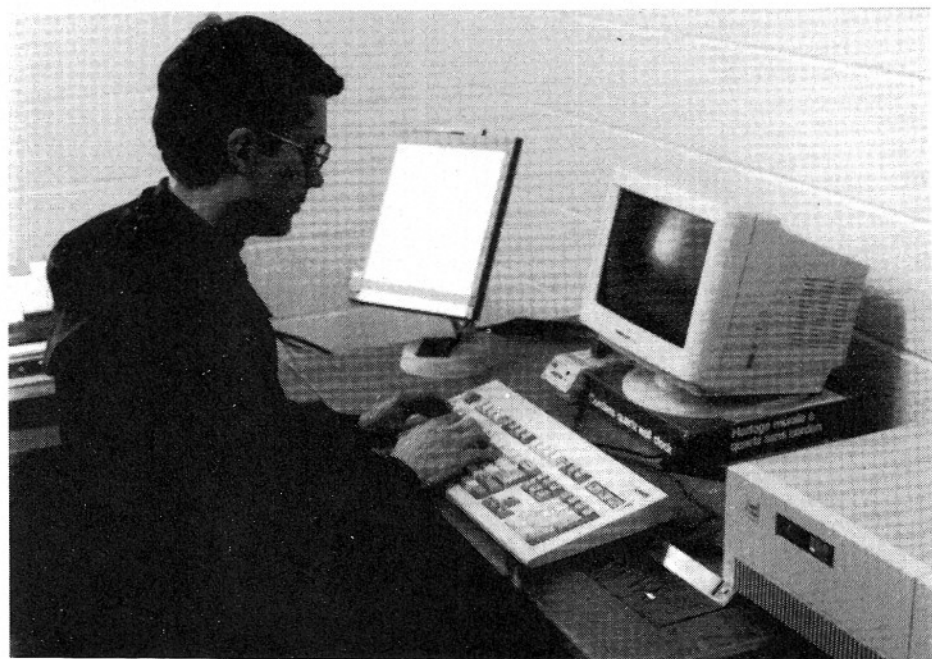
Fr. Norbert Schwinghammer is always prepared to play the organ when another organist does not show up. Actually, Fr. Norbert also takes his regular turn.



Br. Thomas Ward, a student in food management, doesn't always wear his habit in the kitchen.



Br. Stanley Vindevoghel, college dean and computer expert, checks out and prepares the machine for the students' use.



Fr. William Thurmeier, who is also an electronics technician, is acquainting himself with the computers in the business office of the abbey.

Oblates in North America

Sr. Pauline Stevens, OSB, of St. Benedict's Monastery, Pittsburg, PA., conducted two surveys on Benedictine Oblates. She makes the following observations: 1989 Study results in the following information:

- 19 communities of women have a total of 1,941 Oblates;

- 14 communities of men have a total of 5,401 Oblates.

- in 1985, 19 additional women communities reported a total of 641 Oblates;

- in 1985, 17 additional men communities reported a total of 3,202 Oblates.

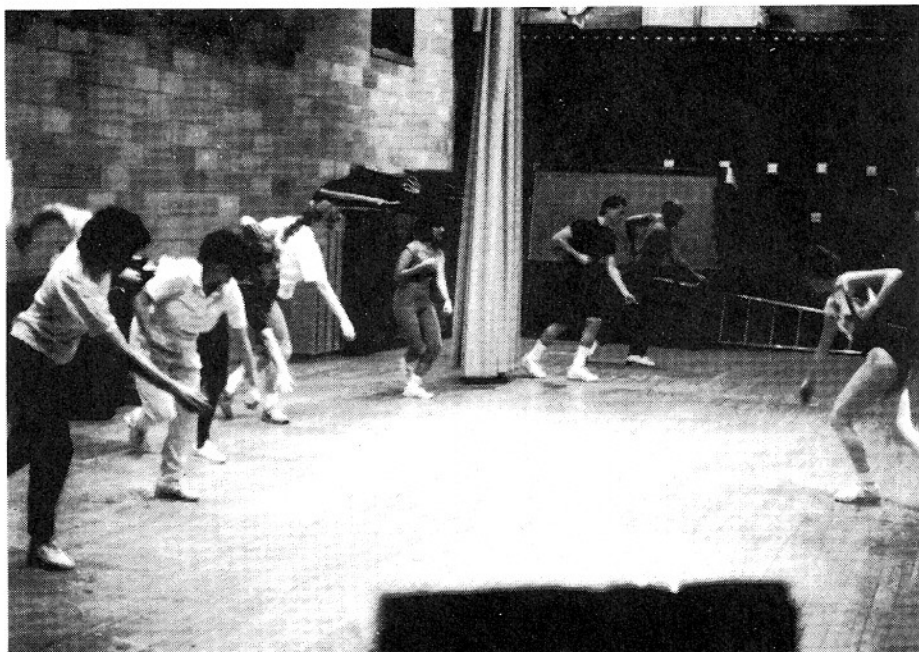
Many of the Benedictine communities have thriving programs at present. We can safely say there are over 10,000 Benedictine Oblates seeking God in 1989. St. Peter's Abbey has about 75 Oblates and Oblate candidates. We invite all abbey newsletter readers to become Oblates of St. Peter's Abbey; it's free.

Oblate Days for 1990 are set for: March 24, July 14 and November 17.



Fr. Albert Ruetz, oblate director, with Clara Freistadt of Carmel, who made promises as an Oblate on July 8, 1989.

For further information, just write Oblate Director, St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Sask. S0K 2Y0 or phone 682-2581.



Myrna Britz of Muenster is the instructor for college aerobics which is held three times per week. Synchronizing comes later.

A new weatherman

On Aug. 29, 1989, a new weather station was installed on the abbey property. Nels Arvidson of Environment Canada, Saskatoon Office, authorized the new location, which is close to the hermitage of Fr. James Gray, OSB. Fr. James is continuing the volunteer weather reporting which was begun 86 years ago; the first temperature reading at St. Peter's Abbey was taken on Jan. 4, 1904.

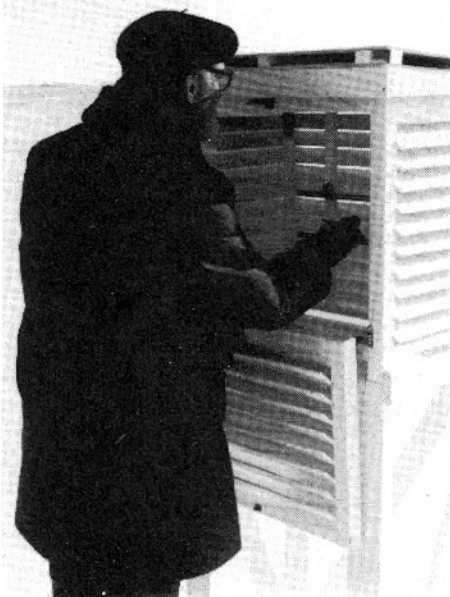
Since that time, about 20 members of the community of St. Peter's Abbey have been involved in weather reporting. Brother Bruno Koneceni recorded weather observations for the longest period of 25 years. Another long-term observer was Br. Oswald King (recently deceased). Between temporary volunteers, Br. Bernard Lange oversees the continuity of the daily readings.

In Canada, there is a network of more than 2,000 climatological observers who daily observe and record temperature extremes, amounts of precipitation and general remarks concerning the weather in their location. The observers come from all walks of life and the large majority perform these duties on a voluntary basis. St. Peter's might have a "first" for Canada in the area of climatology: their observer is a hermit.

Fr. James Gray, who is a full member of the Benedictine Order, has been a hermit for over 15 years. Besides gardening, teaching English and recording the weather, Fr. James is an avid environmental conservationist. He has also recorded the sighting of over 66 different species of birds. Only two of these will feed out of his hand: the Chickadees and one Nuthatch.

There is a Benedictine monastery on the Prairies.
Phone (306) 682-2581
or write: Vocation Director,
St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Sask. S0K 2Y0.

Information received from these weather stations assist Environment Canada to make recommendations concerning the effects of weather in agriculture, forestry, energy and water management.



Fr. James Gray is the present abbey weather observer; not a forecaster.



"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." Fr. James feeds the birds while going to and from the weather station — summer and winter.

St. Peter's College Update

By A.V. Saretsky, Director

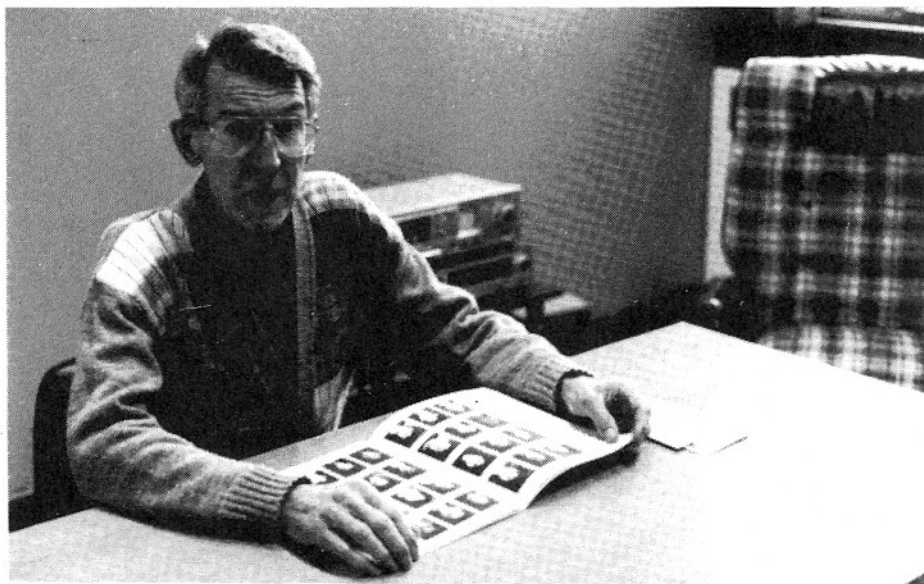
When the deadline for applications, Aug. 15, arrived, 99 full-time students had been accepted by the college. At the time of this writing, 94 students remain. The number of part-time students numbers about 65. It would be difficult to accommodate many more students because of the restriction of space and also because of the availability of instructors. There is no doubt that the pressure for students to find places in post-secondary institutions is quite critical, even though the cost of education continues to rise.

I am happy to state that Father Maurice Weber has accepted the post of College Chaplain on a daily part-time basis. I am sure you are aware of Father Maurice's failing health and hope that you continue to remember him in your prayers. It is hoped that the student body will make good use of the chaplaincy service. We very much appreciate Father Maurice's willingness to provide this service.

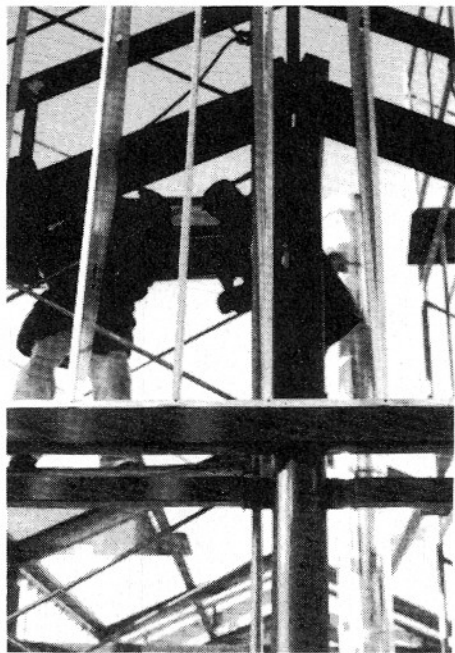


Br. John Brodner listens every day to some of the many tapes he receives free from the Xavier Society.

The administration offices have been relocated (since last July). We now operate on the first floor, beside the west entrance. We are now in the mainstream of college-student life. You are cordially invited to stop in and chat, should you have an occasion to visit St. Peter's.



Fr. Maurice Weber is back in his old/new office. He recently accepted the position of chaplain for St. Peter's College students and instead of the name "principal," the sign says "chaplain" above the door.

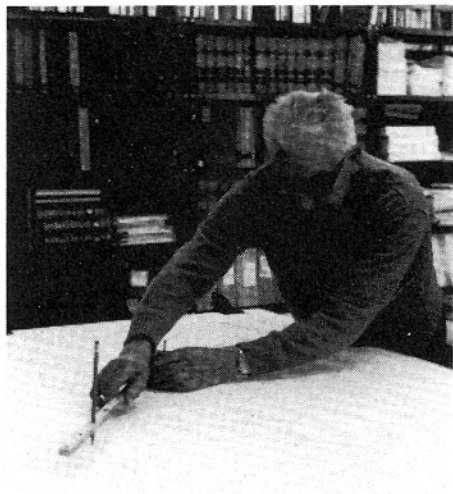


Br. Francis Fortney (right) and co-worker on the abbey church.



The abbey church slowly rises even during the extreme cold weather.

Even though the abbey church is a little further advanced than shown above, contributions are still accepted. Tax receipts are issued for all donations — of any amount. Thank you for your generosity.



Fr. Alfred Engle preparing the cartoons for the stain-glass windows in the abbey church.



Two reliable workers on the abbey church site are: Foreman Willy Jonas and Br. Wolfgang Thiem.

Rest in peace

In your prayers please remember our deceased confreres, relatives, Oblates and staff:

Mrs. Cecelia Brinkman, 88, of Fort Worth, Texas, died Oct. 22, 1989.

Sister Clarentia, SSND, 96, of Elm Grove, Wisc., died Dec. 5, 1989.

The above are both sisters of Fr. Matthew Michel (93).



Reflections by Richard Photo

Helen Britz †1938-1990

While our newsletter was being edited, a long-time staff member, Helen Britz passed away. Helen, who was the housekeeper in Severin Hall guest department for over six years, died of cancer on Jan. 14, 1990. Mrs. Britz, always a bundle of energy, enthusiasm and efficiency, was only 51 years of age. She is survived by her husband Ralph Britz of Muenster and three children, Lynn Junk, Drew and Evan Britz.

The above photo was taken two months before she died, on her birthday, Nov. 14, 1989. May she rest in peace.

(All relatives, Oblates, staff and monks of our congregation are remembered in prayer by the community at the time of death.)

Farm report

By Bernard Lange, OSB

Winter is already more than half over and we are looking toward spring with fresh optimism.

The seed catalogs are already here and it's time to order garden seeds for spring planting.

This winter we were kept quite busy in the farm shop, manufacturing iron work to be used in our new church. We built iron grating to fit over the window tunnel in the courtyard and also for the air vent. All the ballasters and hand-rails for the stairs and also guardrails are ready to be installed.

It won't be long before we have to start cleaning grain for seeding and start thinking about getting machinery ready for spring. With January gone February is standing ready to continue where January left off. After that the next month marches right in and, before we realize it, Easter is here — which is a sure sign of spring.



Br. Bernard Lange giving the finishing touches to some guard rails he built in his farm shop. The iron rails are for the abbey church walkways.

How to become a member of St. Peter's Abbey

If you are the least bit interested or curious about the life of a monk and you think God might be calling you to a life of prayer and service, pick up your telephone and dial 682-2581 or write to the Vocation Director at St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Sask. S0K 2Y0. He will send you all the information you will need to help you decide if you want to take a closer look at how monks live and work.

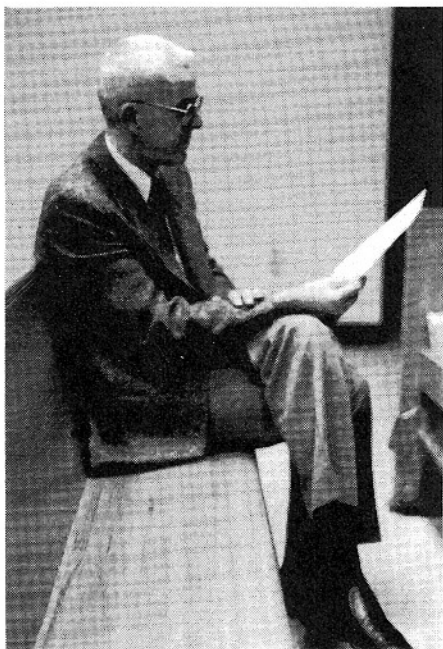
You could be invited to spend a period of one or two weeks in our guestwing while you observe at close range a monk's schedule of prayer, reading and work — the three pillars of monasticism. There is no cost to you for any of these programs.

If you are around the age of 25 or over, a man of faith and prayer, and express an interest in joining the community, the Vocation Director will invite you to complete an application form with three references which he will present to the Vocation Team for a vote of acceptance.

Should the vote be positive, you will be invited to return for a longer period of discernment of whether God is calling you or not. If the community invites you to enter the next period of a six-month commitment, you will return in September to live in the monastery where all postulants and novices reside to live the life of a monk.

The community will vote at the end of each of the three stages listed above; the candidate is free to depart any time during these three periods. Should you wish to become more closely united with the monastery, then you can take promises of vows for a three-year period; these are called temporary vows. Only after five years of observation does the future monk make a final commitment for life.

These various stages of discernment are useful and necessary to both the candidate and the community to know if God is leading you to serve him through prayer, reading and work at St. Peter's Abbey.



Benjamin Nickel of Grande Center, Alta., will enter the novitiate in April.



Our first Vietnamese candidate, Anthony Nguyen of Saskatoon, will also enter the novitiate in April.

How to nourish a vocation

The following are some of the ways to care for the divine life received in baptism, which will encourage the full development of an interior life, possibly leading to the choice of a life completely dedicated to God and the service of others:

- careful attention to the *Word of God*, which will help to shed light on the choices that can lead to a more radical following of Christ;

- active participation in the sacraments, especially the *eucharist*, which is the essential core of the spiritual life, and the source and nourishment of all vocations;

- also the sacrament of *reconciliation* which, because it encourages an ever more total conversion of heart, purifies the process of personal commitment to God's plan and strengthens the bond of union with Christ;

- *personal prayer*, which enables one to live constantly in the presence of God; and *liturgical prayer*, which unites all of the baptized in the public prayer of the church;

- *spiritual direction*, which is an effective means for discerning the will of God: responding to God's will is the beginning of spiritual maturity;

- *filial love for the Blessed Virgin*, which is particularly significant for the spiritual and vocational growth of every Christian;

- a *commitment to asceticism*, since the response to God's call often involves the kind of renunciation and sacrifice that is only made possible through healthy and balanced ascetical practices.

(The above means of nourishing the seed of divine life were written by Pope John Paul II in a letter to the Episcopate throughout the world, in preparation for the annual World Day of Prayer for Vocations, this year, to be observed on May 6, 1990.)

St. Peter's Abbey Newsletter
Muenster, Saskatchewan
S0K 2Y0

