



New abbot writes his first message

By Abbot Peter Novecosky

Since July 23, the community of St. Peter's has been living in a time of transition. For me, the transition has been one of letting go of the various jobs I have been involved in and getting to feel what it is like to "be abbot." For the community and the people of the abbacy it has been a time of waiting until the election results were confirmed by the Congregation of Bishops and the public ceremony of blessing could take place. The confirmation was telephoned to me Oct. 10 by the apostolic nuncio in Ottawa. Plans are now being made to have the blessing on Monday, Nov. 26.

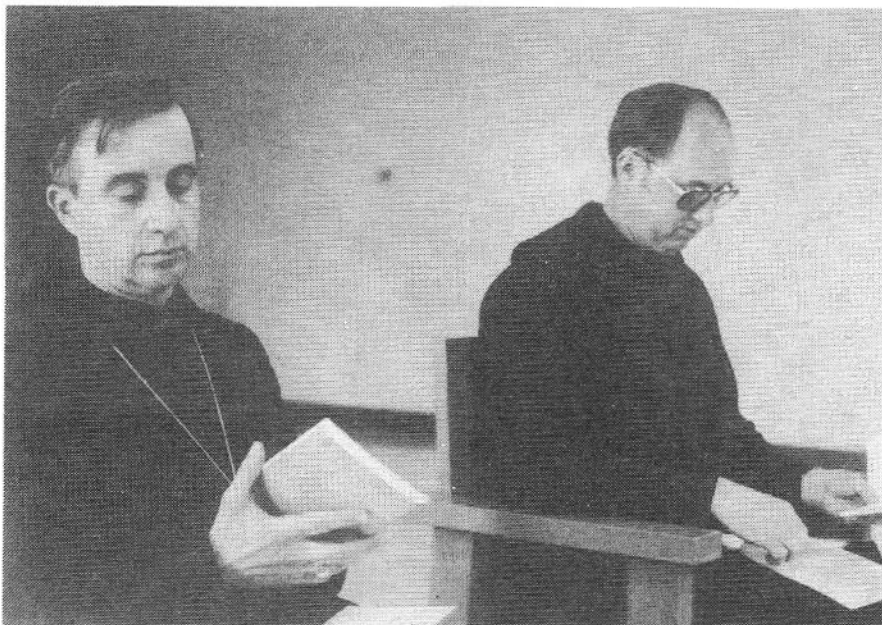
As I reflect on what it means to be abbot, many things come to mind. First of all, I reflect on what St. Benedict says in the Prologue to his Rule re his purpose for forming a

monastic community: "Therefore we intend to establish a school for the Lord's service."

A second thought that comes to mind is St. Benedict's criterion for admitting a novice to the monastic community: "The concern must be whether the novice truly seeks God?" We can extend that further, to the whole monastic community, and ask: "Do we as a community continue to truly seek God?" We are a monastic community in a certain time and place. We live in a particular historical moment and in a particular setting. What does it mean to seek God, to be open to God, to be at God's service, at this time and in this place? Vatican II's Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life offers two basic guidelines: re-examine the charism of your founder and look at the signs of the times.



Immediately following his election as abbot, Fr. Peter signed the required documents in the presence of election officials. The election was chaired by the Abbot President of the American Cassinese Congregation, Abbot Melvin Valvano of Newark Abbey, New Jersey. Shown above are Fr. William Thurmeier watching Br. Stanley Vindevogel stroke his mustache, while Abbot Melvin and Fr. Leo Hinz witness the signing.



Abbot Melvin and Abbot-elect Peter wait for the Oath of Office to be made in the presence of the entire community.

One focuses on the past, the other on the present and future. Asking ourselves if we as a community truly seek God makes us aware that it is easy and comfortable to fall into certain routines and customs; it is easy to settle into the status quo with which we have become comfortable. However, we also have to admit that an uncritical look at our life can immunize ourselves from the difficult task of "seeking God," not only individually, but also as a community. We live at a time when our culture is going through

some difficult times. In our own country we are faced anew with the need to treat our aboriginal people with respect. We are facing an economic crisis in rural Saskatchewan with many farmers facing bankruptcy. We are facing the depopulation of our rural areas and the loss of the family farm lifestyle. How do we as a community respond to this, or should we? How do we respond to this as a monastic community? How is God calling us to be witness at this time in history and in this place in rural Saskatchewan?

It would be comforting to be able to lay out a "five-year plan." However, I realize that I need to do a lot of "listening" first, both to members of the abbey and to members of the abbacy. But the listening is done in the context of trying to discern God's will for us and in trying to establish a school for the Lord's service. St. Benedict does offer a style of living which is perennially valid. It can be described as having a three-fold attitude: gratitude, interdependence and prayerfulness. Benedictines live in gratitude for the ways God has blessed them. At this time, our community lives in gratitude for the 30 years of leadership provided by Abbot Jerome in a difficult time of church history.



A sign of greeting, support and peace was given by all monks, including Juniors and Candidates. Here the Vicar General and Chancellor of the Abbacy, Fr. Leo Hinz, greets the newly-elected abbot.

We also live in gratitude for all the gifts of personality and talent we share with one another. We live in gratitude for the new members we continue to be blessed with. We live in gratitude for the contributions of our staff, our Oblates and the larger community around St. Peter's. The lifestyle Benedictines are called to is an interdependent lifestyle. We throw our lot in with one another and are a support to each other. I think an interdependent lifestyle is one that speaks to our age which relishes individualism and "doing your own thing." We live a prayerful lifestyle, coming together

regularly to pray as a community. The completion of our new Church of Sts. Peter and Paul will be a more visible symbol of the importance prayer has in a Christian lifestyle. The prayerful and welcoming atmosphere provided by the monastery is much appreciated by our guests. Looking ahead, I might note that 1992 is the 100th anniversary of the founding of our community in Cluny, Ill. In 1996 we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of St. Peter's Abbacy. The year 2000 will likely be a special time of celebration for the whole Christian community, as it celebrates the second millennium. The year 2003 will mark the 100th anniversary of our community's arrival at St. Peter's in Muenster. As we look ahead to the challenges the Lord presents to us at this time and place, we do so with confidence because we are mindful of and grateful for the Lord's blessings in the past.

(On Oct. 19, 1990, Feast of the Canadian Martyrs, Pope John Paul II officially approved the election of Peter Wilfred Novecosky as fourth Abbot-Ordinary of St. Peter's Territorial Abbey. The abbatial blessing by Bishop James P. Mahoney of Saskatoon will take place in St. Augustine's Church, Humboldt, on Nov. 26, 1990. — Ed.)

A note from Abbot Jerome

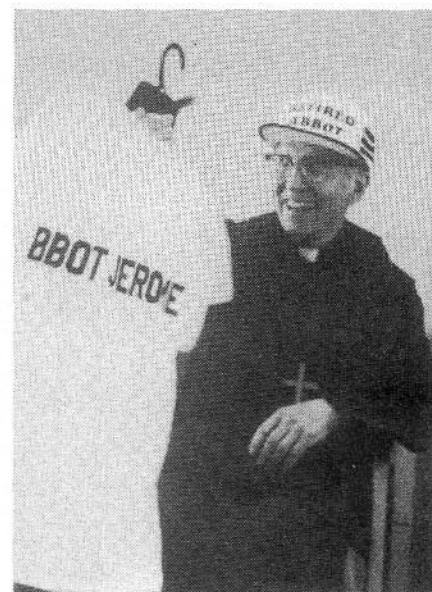
Life has been quite different for me in many ways since my resignation as abbot ordinary was accepted by Pope John Paul II and became effective on June 15, 1990.

The day was a very special one in our community. There was a mass at 11:00 a.m. at which I was the principal celebrant and homilist. This gave me an excellent opportunity to thank the monks for their generous co-operation and response during the 30 years that I was abbot-ordinary. A very delicious dinner followed this mass. Shortly after the meal there was a program of appreciation and then the gift of the T-shirt and the cap, on which were the words "Retired Abbot."

On that same day Prior Peter Novecosky became the apostolic

administrator and was to remain in that capacity until the monks had elected my successor and approval of our choice had been received from Pope John Paul II. This arrangement was provided for by the Constitutions of the American Cassinese Congregation to which St. Peter's belongs. I spent most of the following month visiting relatives and friends in Regina, Winnipeg (with the Benedictine sisters), Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

I returned for the pilgrimage at Mt. Carmel on July 22. This gave me an opportunity to thank the people of the abbacy for their great kindness to me, their generosity and prayers. There I received a very comfortable easy chair, now in my room, and a generous gift of money. Most of the people received



a piece of the huge cake that was made for the occasion. On Aug. 9, accompanied by my sister, Mary Louise, I went to Maceio, Brasil, where we spent three weeks. It was most gratifying to hear the people express their great appreciation for the work of our priests and sisters. It was also good to see again many of the friends and places that I had seen on previous visits. I was also impressed by signs of real progress in certain areas that have occurred during the past 20 years. Among these are the training of many lay leaders in the community, the development of social centres, greater involvement of laity, especially youth, in the liturgy, as lay presiders, who preside quite frequently. There are still many great problems in education, health and the economy, which suffers so much from inflation.

The Ursulines have built a very comfortable house, to be a house of formation for future Ursulines, where Sr. Claire and Sr. Lousie live. It is about a 15-minute drive from Sao Jose, the parish in the city, where the others live. About a mile from the sisters' house is a new development for the "street kids" which is under the supervision of Fr. Sylvester since it is in his new parish in the city of Marechal Deodoro, about half an hour by car from Maceio.

A few weeks after my return I attended the meeting of the Saskatch-



Mementos of Abbot Jerome's life were presented during the mass on July 30 in St. Augustine's Church, Humboldt, by the following monks: Br. Bernard (skates); Br. Basil (globe); Br. Thomas (Scripture); Br. Aidan (Holy Rule); Br. Francis (lawn mower); Br. Gerald (evergreen); Br. Demetrius (mitre). Missing from the picture is Br. Randy who carried the abbot's crosier. To commemorate the event the spruce tree has been planted on the east lawn outside the abbot's office.

ewan Health Association Conference at Prince Albert. By that time I knew I was to become the resident chaplain at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Humboldt, and so was very interested in the topics discussed at the meeting.

On Sept. 27 I moved to the hospital, to the suite of the chaplain, on the first floor. You are quite welcome to visit me there!

I have always thought that this kind of ministry is important, that it is very near to the heart of Jesus Christ, that it gives me an opportunity to console the sick, the sorrowing, the dying and their family and friends.

I ask God's abundant blessing on Abbot Ordinary Peter, the new officials and the whole community, and your continued prayers for me.

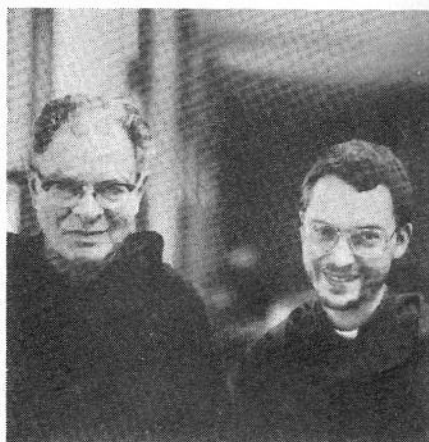


New novices



Anthony Nguyen of Saskatoon and Lucius Allison of Calgary entered the novitiate during the Vigils service for the Feast of St. Gregory the Great, Sept. 2. Lucius took the name Aidan — a Scottish saint.

On Sept. 3, the feast of St. Gregory the Great, two candidates entered the novitiate during the office of Vigils. They are Gerard Lucius Allison of Calgary, who took the name Aidan, and Anthony Nguyen of Saskatoon. Shown above are Brother Aidan, Fr. William (new novice master), and Brother Anthony who was originally from Vietnam.



Frs. Albert Ruetz and William Thurmeier were named Junior Master and Novice Master, respectively, by Abbot Peter Novecosky.

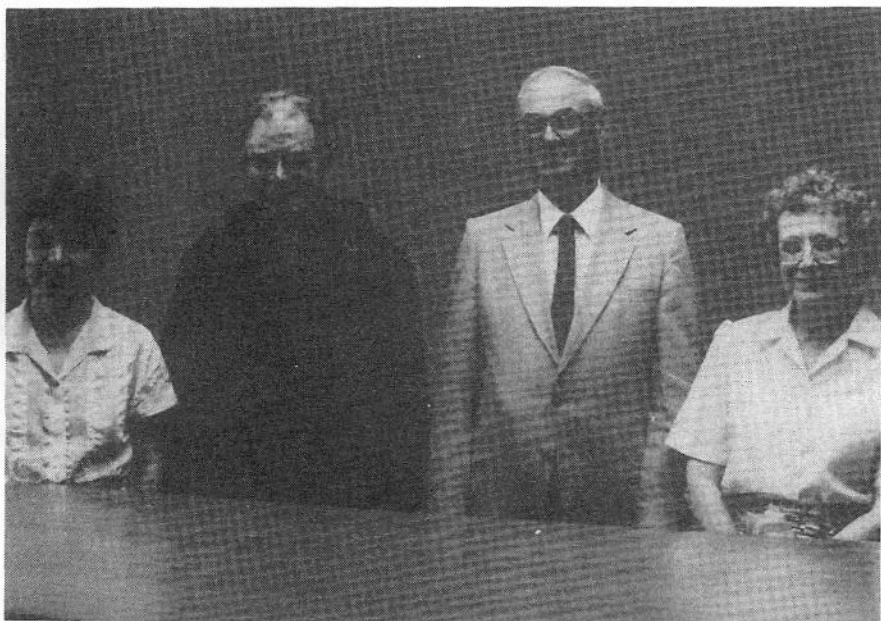
Oblates

Benedictine Oblates seek God in association with a monastic community: as individuals and as members of a body, they grow in love of God, neighbor and self. With the Rule as their guide, Oblates adopt values that are a part of the very fabric of Christian spirituality, such as spending time daily reflecting on the Sacred Scriptures; cultivating an awareness of the

presence of God in silence; devoting time to the praise of God, performing acts of mortification. An acquaintance with these and other Christian values presented in the Rule of St. Benedict will enable Oblates to attain that special peace and joy that Christ came to bring and promised to all who follow him.



On July 22, Ian and Donna Erickson (Saskatoon), Marie Scholfied (Cudworth), Ben Nickel (Grande Centre, Alta.), Wayne Sturgess (Saskatoon), Fr. Kragbe Legre (Castor, Alta.), Delphine Bauman (Cudworth), Al Kehreg (Watson), Martin Scholfied (Cudworth), were enrolled as Oblate candidates.



On July 22, Lucille Chevrier of Saskatoon, John Hall (Humboldt), and Mathilda Saret-sky (Humboldt) made their Oblations as Oblates.

Maurice Raymond Weber, OSB (1934 - 1990)

Most of our readers were aware that Fr. Maurice had been taking treatment for liver cancer for the past two years. But it came as a shock when his condition suddenly took a turn for the worse while he was awaiting a minor operation in Royal University Hospital. This very popular priest, pastor, principal and spiritual director passed away on May 27, 1990 after displaying admirable patience and friendliness during his last illness.

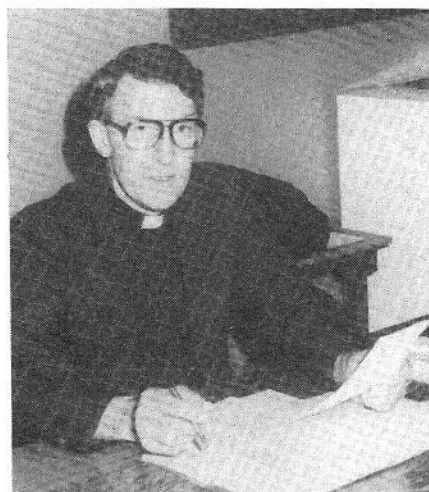
Raymond Weber was born at Watson and received his schooling there before coming to St. Peter's College for Grades 11, 12 and Arts. He was active in dramatics, public speaking and the yearbook.

In 1954 he entered the novitiate of St. Peter's Abbey, receiving Maurice as his monastic name. On July 11, 1955, he made his first profession of vows.

He studied theology at St. John's Abbey and was ordained to the priesthood at St. Peter's Cathedral, Muenster, on June 10, 1961, by Bishop Francis J. Klein of Saskatoon.

After ordination he joined the staff of St. Peter's College until 1964 when he took studies in chemistry and received his master of science degree from the University of St. Louis in 1967. He resumed teaching at St. Peter's College and also taught at the Ursuline Academy at Bruno from 1972 until 1976.

In the fall of 1976 Father Maurice



Fr. Maurice Weber, as principal of St. Peter's College

studied theology and monastic history and spirituality at the International Benedictine College of Sant' Anselmo in Rome, where he received his licen-



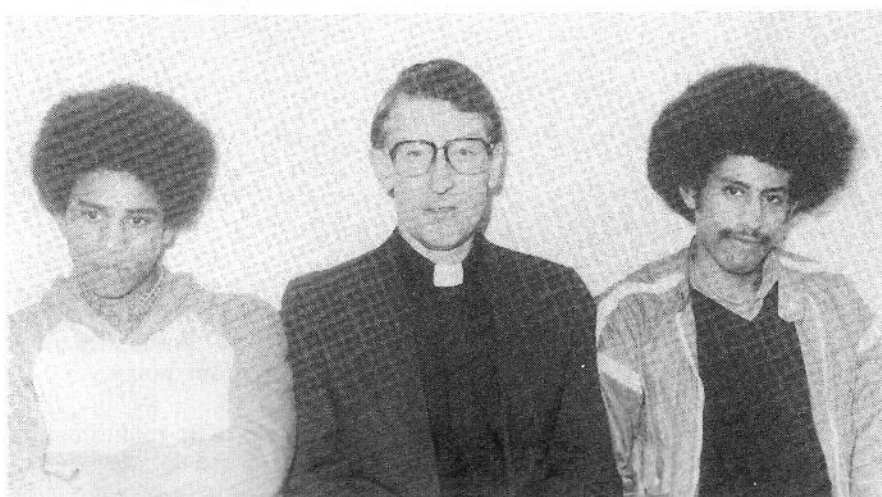
Fr. Maurice was a classmate of Fr. Daniel Muyres; they celebrated the 25th anniversary of ordination together — both locally and at St. John's Abbey where they studied theology.



Mrs. Josephine Junk made her Final Oblation as an Oblate in Humboldt on Friday, June 22, the Feast of the Sacred Heart. She is assisted by her sister Caroline Dauk and Oblate Director Fr. Albert Ruetz.

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

- Benedictine Motto



Fr. Maurice was instrumental in bringing refugees to Canada on behalf of the abbey. Here he is shown with Daniel and Isaias Haile from Ethiopia.

tiate in theology in 1978.

At St. Peter's Abbey, Fr. Maurice held the position of Prior for eight years. He was also vocation director for the abbey until 1987 and he taught in the monastic formation program right up until his death.

At St. Peter's College Father Maurice taught religion, literature, chemistry and world religions. In 1982 he returned to the principalship of St. Peter's College which he held until illness forced him to retire two years ago.

The many get-well cards from school children, university students and friends during his illness and the numerous tributes paid after his death attest to the admiration, love and popularity of Father Maurice Weber.



One of the last pictures taken of Fr. Maurice was with his godchild, Christine, in November 1989.

Rest in peace

Please pray with us for the following monks, Oblates and staff:

Maurice Weber, OSB, died May 27.
Susan Krenn of Red Deer, Oblate, died in August.

Leo Torborg, retired employee of St. Peter's College, died Aug. 4.

Mary Gortler of Muenster, Oblate, died Sept. 6.

Election of an abbot

Impressions of a Solitary by jwg

Around the time I was asked to give this report, I read an article in *Sojourners* (July 1990) on the monks of Taizé. The concluding paragraphs stressed the role "trust" plays within the community and its impact on visitors. "There at Taizé I can trust myself," a visitor commented. "I can trust myself to dare to be open with others — because there are so many here who dare to be open with me."

Our discernment process began with an appeal for trust. Its generally favorable reception indicates a willingness on our community's part to grow in trust, a good omen for the future. There is a willingness, too, I think, to grow in community mindedness, to listen to each other. Henri Nouwen has defined community as "the place where hope can grow, where love and friendship can grow, where we bear fruit in weakness, where we come together as broken people — but broken people who can bear fruit." Concern for community is another good omen for our future.

Impressions flow as much from feelings as from facts. The overall impression is that we are trying sincerely to face the facts — and still feel good about ourselves and our future despite manpower problems. Perhaps the shortage of vocations, of pastors, is a blessing in disguise, urging us to seek more actively, positively, the assistance of the laity in our apostolates, something the lay delegates from the parishes urged too. We recognize that we are in some ways overextended and overburdened, that there is need for re-evaluation, reorganization, of our apostolates. If the monastery is to be and remain a centre of prayer, spiritual renewal, at least a minimum degree of contemplative leisure is essential. Well prepared liturgy in the new church will surely be another good omen for the future. Concern expressed for our formation policy, for hospitality and for our mission in Brazil indicates good priorities.

Finally, a view from "the other side": "We should be a dedicated and

prayerful group no matter how older or smaller. Our guest apostolate should remain strong. We should continue to back our mission team" (from Fr. Maurice Weber's submission, written a few weeks before he died).

A Brazilian Viewpoint by Fr. Sylvester Vredegoor

"We Benedictines should have it in our bones."

At a recent meeting of priests representing 16 dioceses in Brazil, a layman begged us to stop being busybodies, celebrating the Eucharist and other sacraments all day long. What they really need of the priests is serious reflection and guidance about the big problems facing the people. Lay presiders can handle baptisms, wakes, and even weddings. But the priest must feed the flock above all helping all to understand the Word of God.

Our conviction to be with the poor makes continuing our mission work in Brazil a priority. But there, too, we must begin a *monastic* way of evangelizing, rather than simply being parish priests. Nothing stops us from fostering the cenobitical lifestyle with our candidates and some pastoral agents. Brazil's diocesan priests met in Itaici last October, and said: "Promote communities of pastoral teams, such as already exist in some dioceses, made up of priests, religious men and women, and lay leaders, who together take on the pastoral mission, pray together, share their goods, and help each other with the Revision of Life. These communities could help overcome some of the more common problems of our priests, such as isolation, loneliness, individualism, machismo, centralizing personalism, affective impasses, and others." This seems inspiration for today. We Benedictines should have it in our bones.

Since last year's five-month course in Rio, I have picked up many signals that God wants us to begin a monastic house in Alagoas, among the poor, different from most monasteries in

Brazil, in its focus on the poor and on being a school for pastoral agents so badly needed everywhere. With one or two suitable monks, I think in five years we can surely show the viability of such a foundation. We have several young men interested right now.

Let me share with you my views of how to elect the abbot. RB (Rule of Benedict) chapter 64 tells us to select the monk who is outstanding for his goodness of life and wisdom in teaching. Thank God we have many monks outstanding in their goodness of life. I think the second item is more demarcating or indicative. Who contributes at meetings? (not as decision-makers so much, but rather as enlighteners.) And for the monks who celebrate at the abbey, whose sermons and celebrations move us, stir us, make us want to come alive?

And the Prairie Messenger is not only for the laity, but for all of us as well. Who uses it as a teaching tool, by contributing articles or letters, or what have you? We do need someone who calls upon everybody to contribute concretely to the building up of our Christ-Body. Our man must embody Galatians 3:28: "No difference between Jew and Gentile, slave and free person, man and woman. All one in union with Christ Jesus." Our man



Some of the monks who witnessed the blessing of the cornerstone of Sts. Peter and Paul Abbey Church. Abbot Jerome is front-centre.

must be the "enlivener," the "animador dos animadores," who inspires new zest for life, new desire to be part of the church, new courage to tackle the gigantic work ahead of us. Such a man is a true gift from God.

Does our man have the capacity to reflect on the complexities of life today, and lead us in our search for God's will?"

Can he make our monastery a haven for those in need of strength on their journey to make this a better world? Can he inspire our fellow monks to break with the ways of the world, also in our running the school, the press, the farm, the diocese, etc.? The world will not be inspired by half measures. Who is the prophet in our midst? And if we are afraid to vote for the true prophet, because he will incite us to change, will we not be condemned by the second part of chapter 64 of RB?

May the Spirit of God inspire us to elect a shepherd who will reflect the ABBA's goodness and love, and who will guide our territorial abbey in its firm proclamation of the Kingdom of Christ, with the help of the same Spirit.

"Let them strive to be loved rather than feared" (RB 64:15).



Newly-elected Abbot Peter Novecosky blessed the Abbey Church cornerstone on the Feast of St. Gregory the Great, Sept. 3, 1990.

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

Family Album (Peter Wilfred Novecosky)



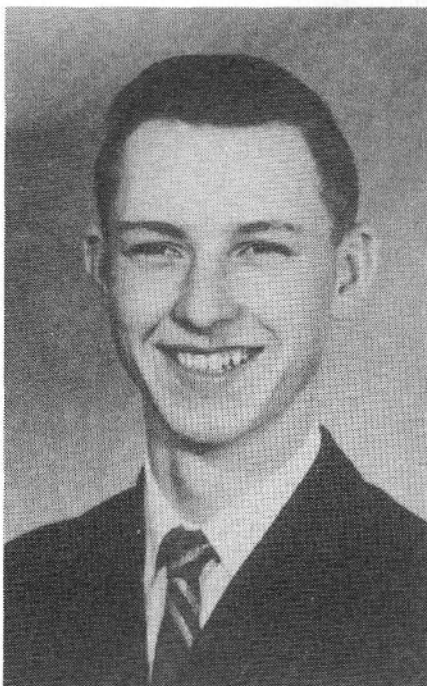
Abbot Peter is the youngest child of Elizabeth and Martin Novecosky formerly of Burr (St. Scholastica's Parish), and now of Humboldt, Saskatchewan.



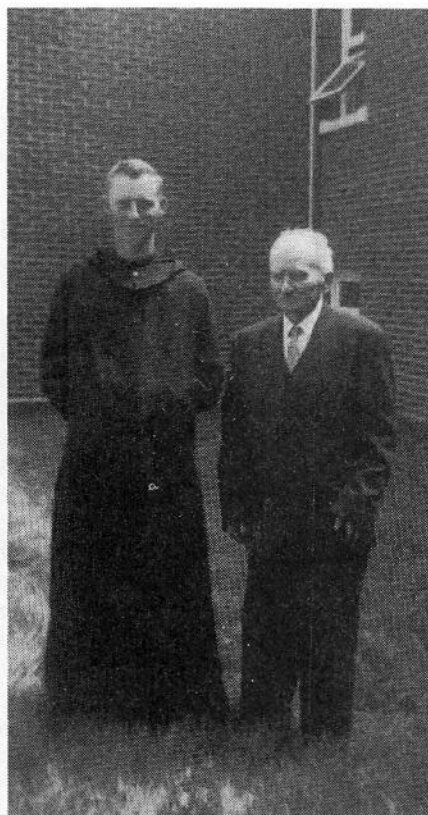
Arnold and Wilfred, aged two with their mother Elizabeth Novecosky. He was a number 3 even at that young age.



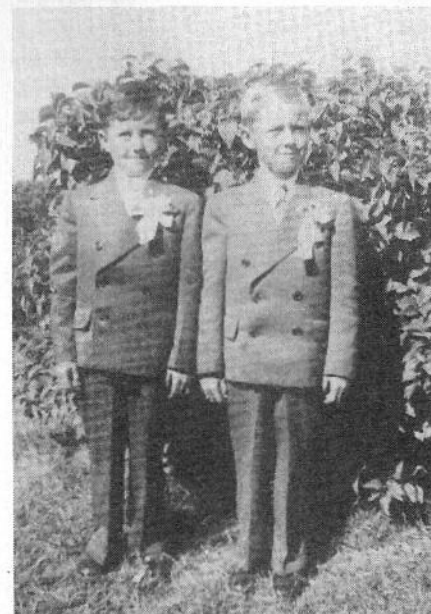
They cared for all living things on God's earth — at age three.



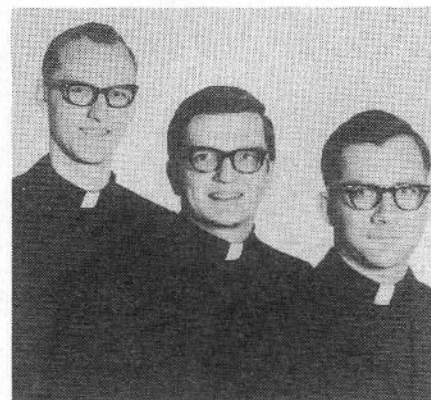
School picture — Wilfred was in Grade XII at St. Peter's College in 1962. He always wanted to be a priest like his cousin Rudolph (Fr. Rudolph Novecosky — now pastor of Annaheim).



In 1963, after completing the first year Arts course at St. Peter's College, Wilfred entered the novitiate and took (was given) the name 'Peter.' His grandfather Suchan visited him on July 10, 1963.



In 1955 Wilfred made his First Communion. By that time he had 'caught up' in height to his older brother, Arnold.



Ordination photo of Fr. Peter, Fr. Damian and Fr. Bernard, 1970.



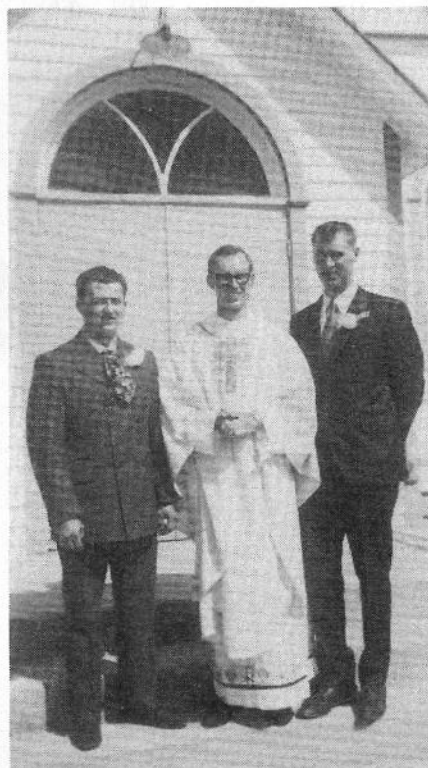
Frater Peter graduated from St. John's Seminary/University on May 30, 1970.



Ordained at the same time were Fr. Damian Yaskowich (deceased) and Fr. Bernard Stauber. Assisting Bishop Mahoney were Fr. Maurice Weber (recently deceased) and Fr. James Gray.



On July 11, 1970, Peter Wilfred Novocosky was ordained priest by the Most Rev. James Mahoney, bishop of Saskatoon.



The next day in his home parish of St. Scholastica's, Burr, Father Peter said his first mass. Posing in front of St. Scholastica's with Fr. Peter are his two brothers, Leonard and Arnold.



Following the first mass a reception with entertainment was held at St. Scholastica's; flautists are Janice Schedlosky, Fr. Peter and Fr. James. Besides being musically 'inclined', Fr. Peter is also athletically 'inclined': he is "unbeaten" in the game of racketball!

Monks make solemn profession

Two monks of St. Peter's Abbey made final profession after three-year temporary vows, in the presence of their monastic community and a large

the abbey and frequently made side-trips to a number of historic sites in the province. Brother Thomas graduated from the Food Service Adminis-



Waiting to profess their solemn vows in St. Peter's Cathedral are Bros. Thomas Ward and Richard Meidl. Br. Richard's mother, Harlinda, sits behind the brothers.

congregation of invited guests.

Brothers Thomas David Ward and Richard Edward Meidl made solemn profession in St. Peter's Cathedral last July 11, with retired Abbot Jerome Weber presiding.

Brother Thomas, who comes from England, was privileged to have his parents, Tom and Ann Ward, present for the ceremony. They were guests of

tration Course at SIAST-Kelsey Campus in Saskatoon and is now the Food Service Supervisor in the abbey kitchen.

Brother Richard Meidl of Dauphin Man., spent six years as a teacher before coming to the abbey. At present he is continuing his theological studies at St. Meinrad Seminary in Indiana.



Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Ward journeyed from England to be present for the solemn profession of their son Thomas David Ward on July 11, 1990.



In June of this year, Br. Gerald attended the Benedictine Musicians Conference which was hosted by New Subiaco Abbey in Arkansas. The only other Benedictine from outside the United States was Fr. Pedro Sosa Esquivel of Tepeyac Abbey in Mexico (above).



Husking corn above are Mary Torborg, Gisbert Thiem (Br. Wolfgang's cousin) and Doreen Szaunier. Proudly looking on is our master Dutch gardener Leo Collin.

College Alumnae reunion

At present, a St. Peter's College Reunion is in the early planning stages. It is tentatively set for August 1991. It has been five years since the last reunion. The new abbey church would serve as the focus for this reunion.

To date, contacts have been made for the steering committee. The objective is to find people who are within a reasonable driving distance of St. Peter's College. Hopefully, more details will be announced shortly.

Also, alumni lists are being computerized, and plans are in the offing to keep in closer contact with former St. Peter's students. This would be done through regular newsletters . . . perhaps three a year.

We will try to keep you posted.

MONKS IN SASKATCHEWAN



(Main Street Studio Photo)

CONTACT: Vocation Director
St. Peter's Abbey
Muenster, Sask. S0K 2Y0
Ph. (306) 682-2581

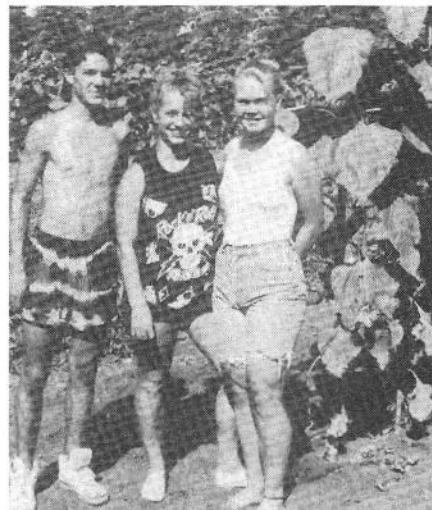
Farm Report

By Br. Bernard Lange, OSB

Spring this year started on an optimistic note: the spring rains came giving the crops and gardens moisture just when they needed it the most. The garden had some problems with flea beetles; they were waiting for the turnips and radishes to pop a leaf and, consequently, no turnips and radishes this year. The rest of the garden was very good. The potato crop was plentiful and the corn was excellent in both quantity and quality.

The canola crop was also plagued by insects — the Bertha Army Worn. It was also a great season for grasshoppers, but they caused no damage to our crops. They could be a problem next year.

The other crops were good. The wheat yielded about 33 bushels per



Helping the monks with the huge garden this summer were local students Amanda Muench, Corinne Kuervers and Scott Blechinger.

acre; barley was not as good — with a yield of about 35 bushels per acre. The oats yielded about 50 bushels, and canola suffered much from the wind after swathing; it yielded about 10 bushels per acre.

Because of the unusually long, warm and dry weather the swathing and combining were completed almost without interruption.

Anniversaries

Father Norbert Schwinghammer became a member of the Octogenarian Club on June 4, 1990. He joined present members: Fathers Matthew Michel, 94 (graduate); Francis Lohmer, 88; Xavier Benning, 89; Brothers Dominic Distel, 85; Gregory Brodner, 85; Conrad Abs, 84; and junior member Fr. Norbert, 80.

Celebrating anniversaries as monks of St. Peter's this year were:

— Br. Conrad Abs — 50 years (Aug. 3, 1940)

— Br. Dominic Distel — 60 years (July 8, 1930) The above anniversaries were observed on Aug. 15, the Feast of the Assumption.

The Prairie Messenger printed a photo of the jubilarians in a September issue of the Catholic weekly.

The statues of Sts. Peter and Paul Church

By Angelo Dobrzynski, OSB

(Editor's Note: The following article appeared in the July-August 1990 issue of the New Subiaco, Arkansas, Abbey Newsletter. It is the story of the same statue which stands in St. Peter's Abbey chapel, and which visitors have asked about for the past 30 years. This article was written by a monk of New Subiaco, Br. Angelo Dobrzynski, and is reprinted with the author's permission. Brother Angelo is presently a student at St. Procopius Abbey in Illinois.)

During the Middle Ages people started to travel great distances to visit places of religious importance. These "journeys" included some of the most important sites in all Christendom such as the Holy Land and also the tombs of saints located all over Europe. Thus the world began to see the dawn of a new religious devotion, namely, the pilgrimage. During this development numerous shrines of Our Lady were becoming popular places of pilgrimage. Hence, various types of pilgrimage devotions to the Mother of God have developed within the church throughout the centuries.

Today many such shrines are found in Asia, Europe and the United States. In Europe Lourdes, Fatima and Montserrat are examples of nu-

merous pilgrimage shrines honoring Our Lady. But to us here at Subiaco, one place of Marian devotion stands out: the chapel and statue of Our Lady of Einsiedeln at Einsiedeln Abbey in Switzerland.

Tradition holds that the present chapel at Einsiedeln stands on the spot where Saint Meinrad, himself a Benedictine monk, had built his own chapel and hermitage, and where he was murdered by two brigands in the year 861. After the saint's death a monastic community formed around that spot and rebuilt the small oratory. This was the beginning of Einsiedeln Abbey, which was destined to become a great place of pilgrimage, for this was the place where Meinrad was slain. But more importantly a legend developed in regard to the dedication of the chapel on Sept. 14 in the year 948. This legend, found in the records of the Bern Cathedral states that "... the Savior had descended to the chapel from heaven in a violet chasuble — the four Evangelists bearing his mitre, flying angels swinging vessels of burning incense, St. Gregory bearing a great scepter and Saint Peter a pastoral staff, Augustine and Ambrose assisting at the ceremony, Stephen and Lawrence reading, and Saint Michael directing the angelic choir as Christ celebrated a pontifical Mass before the Virgin who shone as though lightning." (Einsiedeln, 1988)

As a result of the legend the chapel came to be known as the "Lady Chapel."

It also helped Einsiedeln become a great place of pilgrimage in the early Middle Ages. During the time after the "Great Dedication" a romanesque statue of the Virgin holding the child Jesus was given prominence in the Lady Chapel (about AD 1190). It was to this place that many pilgrims began

to flock.

Apart from the legend, the occurrence of many miracles (the first was recorded in 1338) drew many additional pilgrims. Yet, disaster soon struck the shrine. A fire destroyed the statue and much of the chapel. Large groups of pilgrims continued to come despite this disaster. The chapel was rebuilt, and great festivities marked its



The Black Madonna of Einsiedeln taken in our present chapel by Damian Yaskovich, OSB. This replica of the original was a gift to Abbot Severin Gertkin after he visited the Swiss Abbey of Einsiedeln shortly before he died in 1960.



A wood carving by Albert Gerritsen of Calgary commissioned by St. Peter's Abbey to mark the 1500th anniversary of the birth of St. Benedict (480 - 1980).

Our Lady of Einsiedeln (an historic monastic shrine)

rededication on Sept. 14, 1466. The present wood-carved "Black Madonna" replaced the former statue at about the same time.

Thereafter for almost two centuries the Lady Chapel remained untouched by alterations. However, in 1617 the Archbishop of Salzburg financed the re-embellishment of the oratory. He had the walls of the 1466 shrine covered in marble. One more disaster lay ahead; in 1798 Napoleon's

pilgrims are received annually at Einsiedeln Abbey.

New Subiaco Abbey's founders were principally monks from Einsiedeln by way of St. Meinrad Abbey in Indiana, so in addition to Saint Benedict, Our Lady of Einsiedeln is the second patroness of our abbey church. There is a separate Lady of Einsiedeln Chapel, and the choir area of the monastery is dedicated to the honor of the "Black Madonna."

For the dedication of our abbey church in 1959, Einsiedeln Abbey presented Subiaco with a hand-carved replica of the original statue; it stands behind the altar in the Lady of Einsiedeln Chapel. For special feast days the statue is clothed in appropriate garb, and the chapel is used for many special events. On July 16, Subiaco and other monasteries with Einsiedeln roots celebrate the feast of Our Lady

of Einsiedeln, although this date is more commonly known as the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. (This is the case at St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster. - Ed)

The following prayer is used by pilgrims who come to the shrine at Einsiedeln Abbey and is available on a prayer card in Subiaco's chapel:

O glorious queen of heaven and earth, O blessed virgin Mary, intercede for us before God for his mercy, grace and forgiveness of all our sins by which we have offended your Son. Through you the sick hope for relief, the faint-hearted hope for strength, the oppressed plead for help, the sorrowful ask for comfort, and the dying crying out for support. Stand by all Christians who honor your name, and may they come to know the help of your strong intercession with your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and God. Amen.



The richly adorned Black Madonna of Einsiedeln, Switzerland.

troops destroyed the chapel. The "Black Madonna" was saved, however, and for the next five years it passed through various hands until it was placed in the safe care of the nuns at Bludenz until it could be restored to Einsiedeln Abbey.

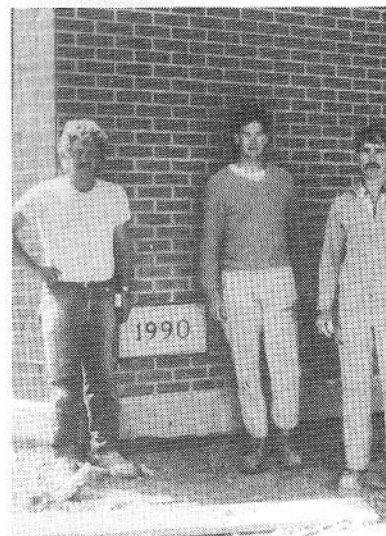
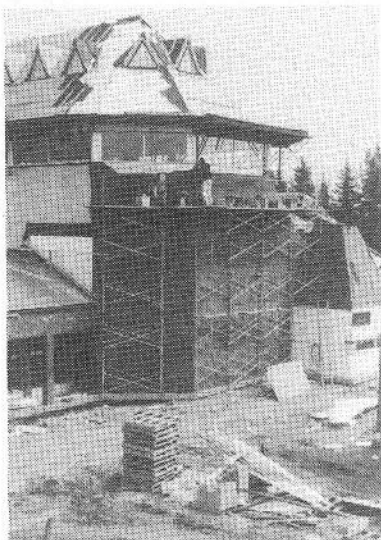
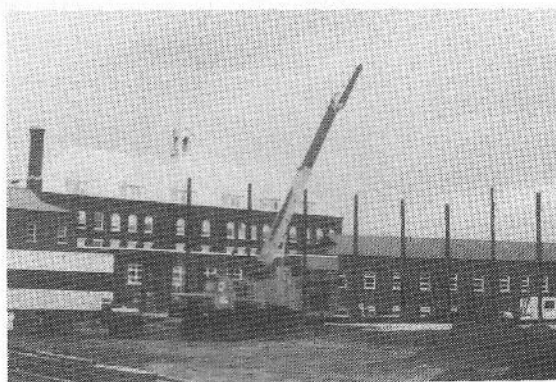
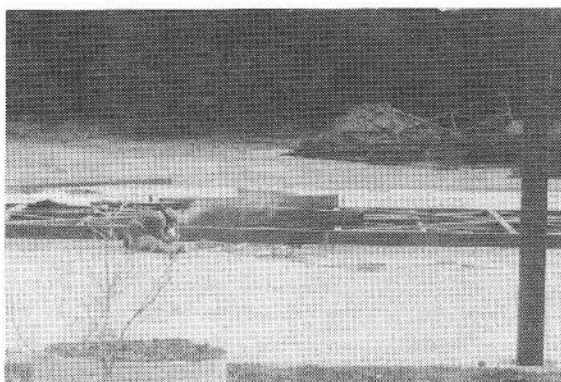
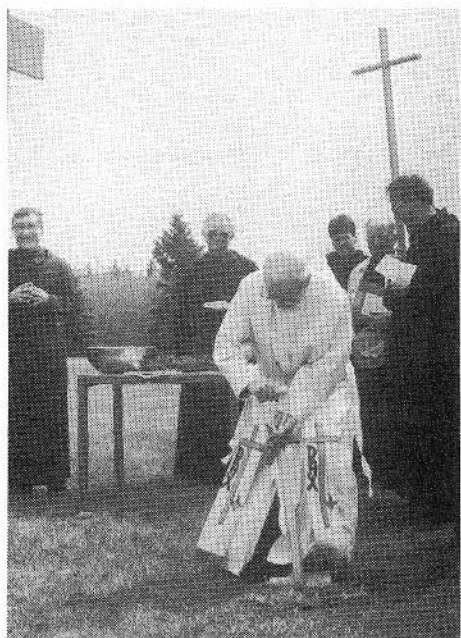
The year 1817 was the rebuilding of the Lady with the use of many of the original stones. With this restoration pilgrimages again flourished. Developments in transportation since that time have facilitated more pilgrimages to the shrine, and, as a result, extended devotion to Our Lady of Einsiedeln. Today around 200,000

Staff honored

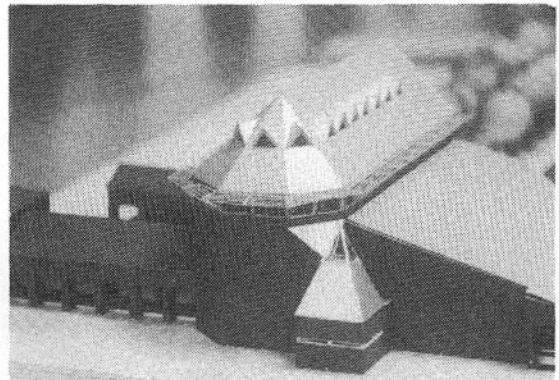
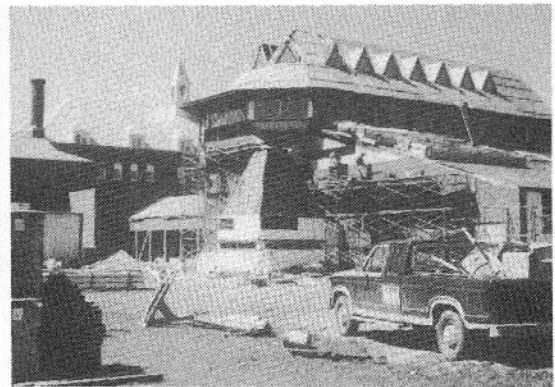
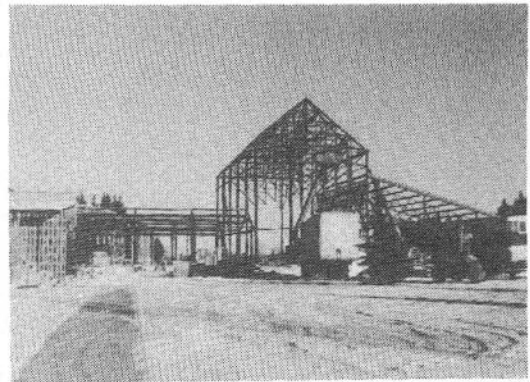
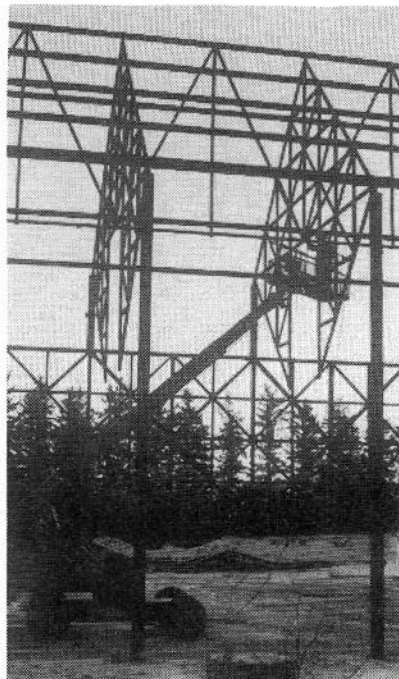
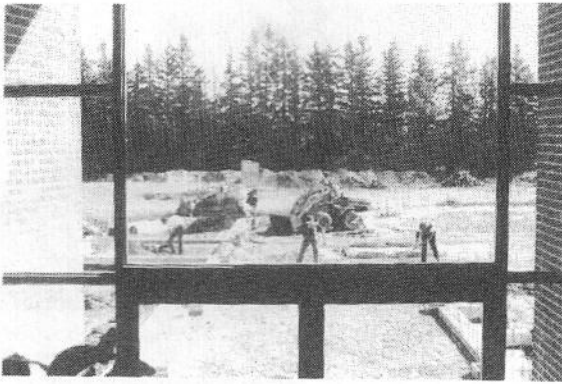


Two staff were honored in September by the community for their long service at St. Peter's. Sr. Valerie Scheiber and Mrs. Mary Torborg retired from kitchen service; Sr. Valerie was in charge of the bake shop for 20 years and Mary was kitchen manageress for 25 years.

Building the Abbey Church Exterior

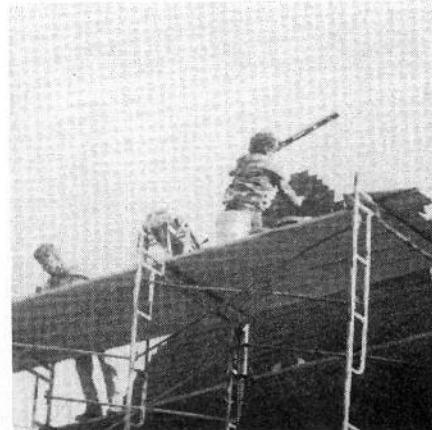


The first year of Construction





Mary and Leo Torborg during Leo's retirement dinner. Both Mary and Leo were long-time employees of St. Peter's College.



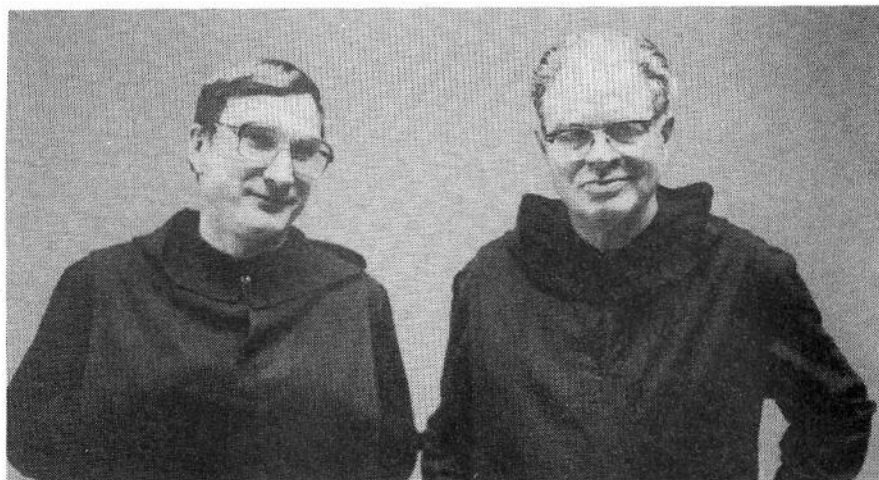
The last brick is put in place by the men of Koby Masonry, Saskatoon, who did all the bricklaying in record time and with great artistry.

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Newly elected Abbot Peter named Br. Basil Schaan subprior and Fr. Albert Ruetz as prior.

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



ST. PETER'S ABBEY NEWSLETTER

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