



Abbot Peter's Message

The major event of the spring at the abbey was undoubtedly the blessing and dedication of the new abbey church, Sts. Peter and Paul. This took place on St. Benedict's Day, March 21.

The Ursulines of Bruno and the Franciscan Sisters of St. Elizabeth joined our celebration. Members of the staff and their spouses were invited and a number of Oblates were also part of the crowd of over 200 people. It was great to have them all join in our celebration. Another celebration for the public is planned for June 29.

In order to make the celebration possible, many hands rallied together to get the church ready. The furniture was put into place the previous day, just a day after the floor tiles were finished. Some last minute jobs were even done the last morning. A great big thank you to all who pitched in the last week, community members and non-community members!

We had another great celebration in the church with the Oblates two days later, at our regular Oblate Day.

These past few months have included a lot of meetings for me — as well as a bit of fun. The major "fun" event was being a linesman at a hockey game

with the Flying Fathers, if getting a pie in your face can be called "fun."

On Feb. 1 Abbot Jerome and I flew to Conception Abbey, just outside Kansas City, for an abbots' meeting. Then I flew to Dallas, Texas, for a meeting of about 200 U.S. and Canadian bishops, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. This meeting focused on the formation of conscience.

From Feb. 22-25 I was in Edmonton for a meeting of religious superiors from Western Canada (CRC-W). It was a good chance to meet many new people and to enjoy the hospitality of the Grey Nuns, especially the swimming pool.

I enjoyed the same hospitality the next weekend, when I drove to Edmonton with Bishops Mahoney and Morand for a meeting of Western Canada bishops. It was a special pleasure to see a very-much-recovered Bishop Delaquis at the meeting.

At Easter I had the honor to preside at the Easter Triduum services in the cathedral. Father Martin and his staff did a super job in preparing the services.

April 9 and 10 were taken up with



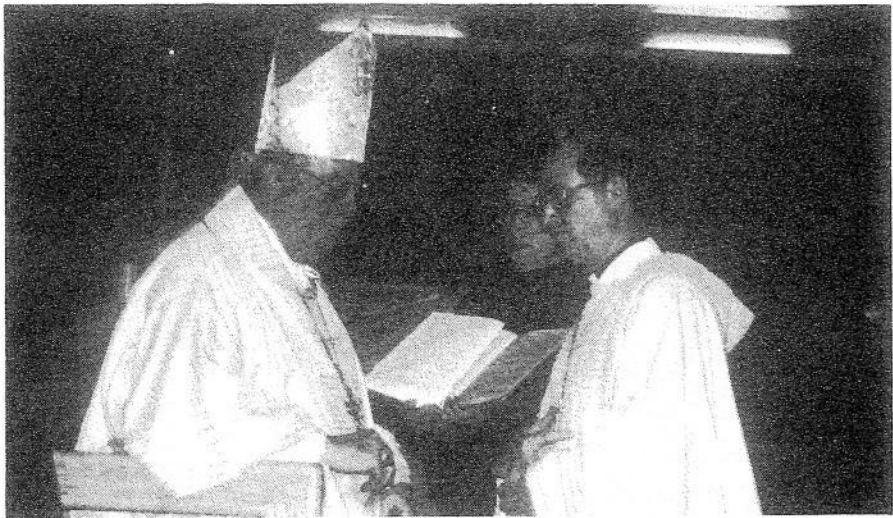
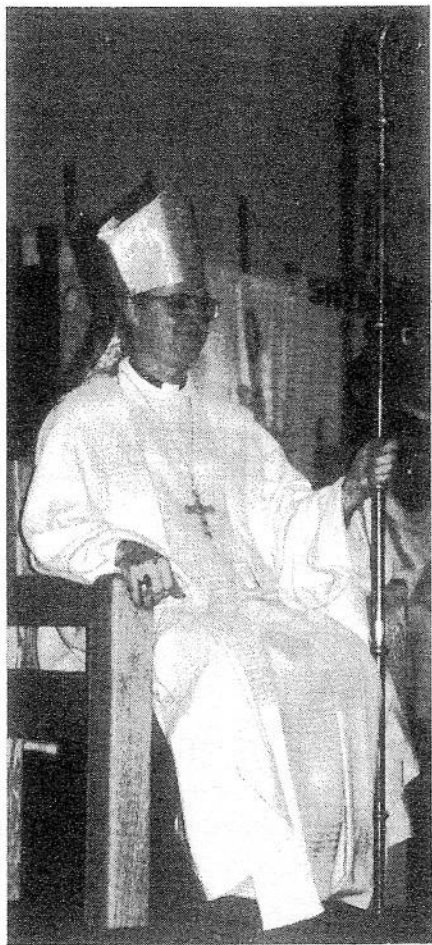
a trip to Saskatoon for a meeting of Saskatchewan Catholic bishops as well as a day-long meeting between the Catholic and Anglican bishops of Saskatchewan.

On the April 14 weekend I started to visit abbacy parishes to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation. This will occupy me pretty well until the end of June.

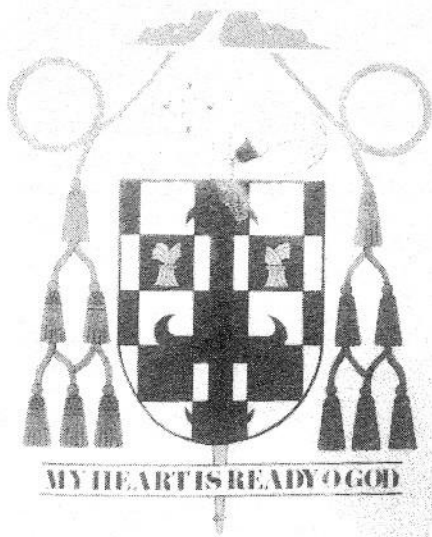


St. Peter's new skyline from the south: College — built in 1921, Abbey cloister — built in 1961, and Sts Peter and Paul Abbey Church — 1991.

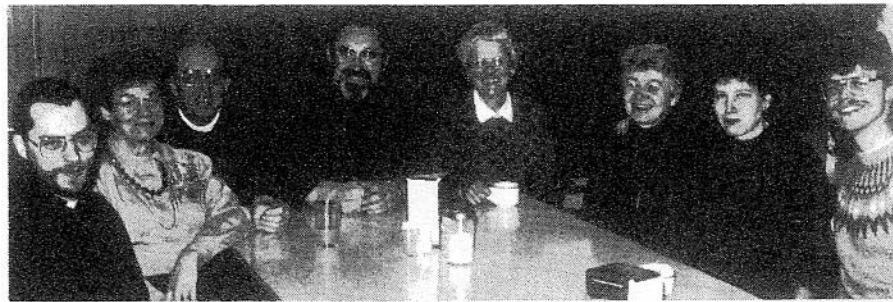
Abbatial Blessing 1990



Sr. Martina Gramlich, OSE, presented Abbot Peter with a quilt made of old vestments on behalf of the Sisters of St. Scholastica's Convent. On Dec. 1, 1990, the convent was vacated and both Sr. Martina and Sr. Victoria Koenig (above) now reside in Humboldt.



Abbot-Ordinary Peter's coat of arms and motto.



A small social with the Abbacy staff: Fr. William Thurmeier, Rita and John Kelly, Br. Thomas Ward, Srs. Celine Graf and Yvonne Billesberger, with engaged Colleen Wickenheiser and Terry Garchinsky.

Things old and new at the abbey:

The major event of the quarter-century took place in St. Augustine's Church, Humboldt, when Peter Novecosky, elected as Abbot of St. Peter's on July 22, was blessed as Abbot-Ordinary by Bishop James Mahoney of Saskatoon on November 26, 1990.

Student monks this past year were Br. Stanley Vindevoghel, finishing his degree in Social Work at Regina University; Br. Richard Meidl in third year theology at St. Meinrad's Archabbey, Illinois; and Br. Demetrius Wasylyniuk in the last year of pre-theology at Mt. Angel Abbey in Oregon.

It is just two years since Abbot Jerome turned the sod and blessed the site of the Abbey church, May 11, 1989. On Sept 3, 1990, Abbot Peter blessed the cornerstone, and on March 21, 1991, feast of St. Benedict, both abbots shared in the blessing of the new Abbey church of Sts Peter and Paul. After 88 years the monks of St. Peter's finally have a suitable building to sing the praises of God and to offer the eucharistic celebration.

Father Alfred Engele, former pastor of Watson, turned 80 on April 15, 1991. He joins the following monks who are in their 80s and 90s: Frs. Matthew Michel, 94; Francis Lohmer, 88; Xavier Benning, 89; and Bros Dominic Distel, 85, Gregory Brodner, 85, Conrad Abs, 84, and Fr. Norbert Schwinghammer, 80. Fr. Alfred has embarked on a second career while retired at the Abbey — stained glass windows for the Abbey church. His new hobby and studio have been featured on national TV.

Upcoming events in 1991: Br. Richard Meidl will be ordained to the diaconate on June 15, 1990; the next Oblate day will be held on June 22; and the "official" opening of the Abbey church will take place on June 29, the Feast of Sts Peter and Paul. On July 11, 1991, the second feast of St. Benedict, Br. Randy Senecal of Rose-town will pronounce Solemn Vows. His will be the first profession in the new abbey church. The next college reunion will be held on the holiday weekend in August — the 3rd and 4th. The last reunion was five years ago.

Early in September, possibly the 8th, Br. Novice Anthony Nguyen of Saskatoon will make first vows.

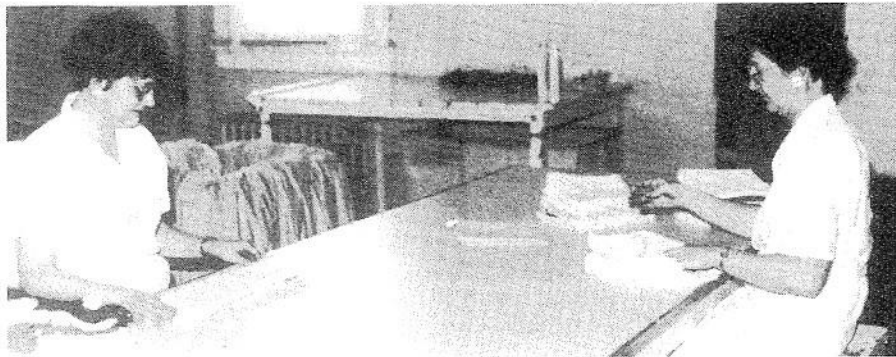
Lucius (Br. Aidan) Allison of Calgary left the novitiate program on May 27 and moved to Regina where he hopes to pursue studies at the University of Regina. Br. Demetrius will spend the final year of the juniorate at the abbey in preparation for final vows. Since returning from Mt. Angel Abbey/Seminary on May 13 he has assumed his former position as infirmarian and is assisting Fr. Xavier Benning with beekeeping.

Monk-professors in the college this past year were: Albert Ruetz — math; James Gray — English; Lawrence DeMong — French, and after studying at the Jesuit University in San Francisco, Br. Kurt van Kuren taught psychology. Prior Albert also assists Fr. Leo Hinz in St. Augustine's Parish in Humboldt and Fr. Lawrence is full-time pastor of Lake Lenore, Marysburg and St. James. Fr. James is a full-time solitary, formation instructor and spiritual director. Winter and summer, Fr. James works in the aspen groves and gardens and is the abbey weather observer.

Fr. Philip Loehr returned to the Abbey last September and is engaged in supporting the Christian Farm Crisis organization, as well as writing for the *Prairie Messenger* on justice and social issues. Also last fall Abbot Jerome moved to the chaplain's suite in St. Elizabeth's Hospital where he is kept busy caring for the sick. Two monks still serve the missions in Brazil: Frs.

Sylvester Vredegoor and Bernard Stauber.

This past year the following monks have been full-time pastors residing in their parishes: Daniel Muyres, Florian Renneberg, Francis Lohmer, George Brodner, Joseph Ackerman, Leo Hinz, Roman Schneider, Rudolph Novecosky and Werner Renneberg. Pastors living at the Abbey include: Xavier Benning, Martin Brodner and Andrew Britz. Some pastoral changes are expected this summer. The principal jobs of the remaining monks (not mentioned above) are: Basil Schaan, subprior, business manager and maintenance director; William Thurmeier: novice master, electronics, choir director and organist; Bernard Lange: farm manager - livestock, repair shop, garden and crops; Francis Fortney: maintenance, engineer, heating, plumbing, grounds, water; Wolfgang Thiem: carpenter, masonry, greenhouse, night watchman; Michael McAlister: abbey maintenance department, candles; Gerald Moran: guest-master, vocation director, organ, barber, newsletter; Thomas Ward: food service manager, MC for liturgies, sacristan; Randy Senecal: work co-ordinator, college repairs and maintenance, grounds. The above list is not all-inclusive; many positions must go unlisted for lack of space. Many of the retired monks listed above continue with the work they have been doing for years. For example, Fr. Norbert is organist, confessor, assists with the sick, and cares for the archives and lists the death notices.



Frequently unrecognized but always appreciated and essential are the services provided by Anne Back and Freda Hilgers. Sylvia Reiter of Annaheim often helps out on a relief basis.



Enrolled as Oblate candidates on November 17, 1990, are, from left, back row: Lee Nickel, now of Yellowknife, N.W.T.; Mary Lieffers, Cudworth; Frank Boser, Humboldt; front row: Pol Zwart, Regina; and Ken Wood of Saskatoon who made his final oblation as a Benedictine Oblate on the same day.



Enrolled as Oblate candidates on March 23, 1991, are: Agnes Lummerding, Bruno; Leonard and Sadie Novocosky, Burr; Bernard and Christine Tritz, Glaslyn. Abbot Peter and Prior Albert make the photo complete.



Former monk-teachers were honored by the College last November: Frs. Norbert Schwinghammer, Philip Loehr, Martin Brodner, Abbot Jerome Weber, Florian Renneberg and Xavier Benning.



Celebrating 25 years as Oblates are Celine Wolsfeld and Maria Reinelt, both of Humboldt.



Elizabeth Saretsky retired from the Abbey accounting office last fall and shared a farewell cake with the community.



Bishop Morelli of Brazil was a visitor with the Development and Peace organization this past winter.

Next Oblate Days: June 22 and November 16, 1991

St. Peter's College Reunion '91

All former students and staff of St. Peter's College are invited to take part in the alumni reunion on Aug. 3 and 4, 1991.

A 12-person committee consisting of Fathers Andrew Britz and Albert Ruetz, Deborah Sarauer, Tony Saretsky, Karen Siermachesky, Germaine Dauk, Ralph Hofmann, Elizabeth Saretsky, Walter Sarauer, Maureen Weber, James Wasserman and Dr. Gerald Junk has been formed. They have met three times so far to plan details of this event. Anyone reading

the Abbey Newsletter and wishing further information should contact the College.

There is no doubt that the new abbey church will be a central focus for all returning alumni. There couldn't be a more appropriate focus. Old and recent graduates of St. Peter's are in for an inspirational treat when they visit Saints Peter & Paul Church.

The alumni committee looks forward with great eagerness to renewing acquaintances with all of you on Aug. 3 and 4.



St. Peter's College Reunion committee consists of the above, (seated): Elizabeth Saretsky, Debbie Sarauer, Tony Saretsky and Maureen Weber. (Standing): Fr. Albert Ruetz, James Wasserman, Ralph Hofmann, Walter Sarauer and Fr. Andrew Britz.



"No it's not beer!"

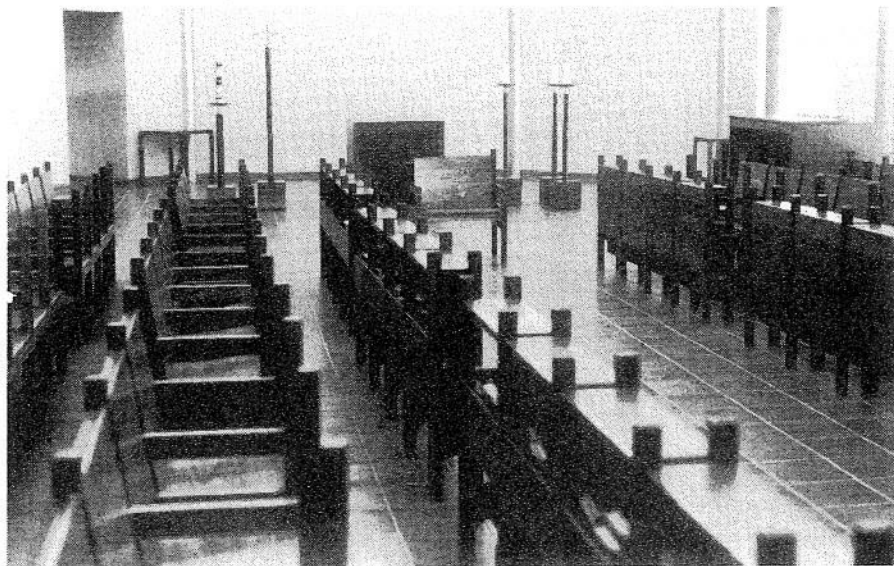
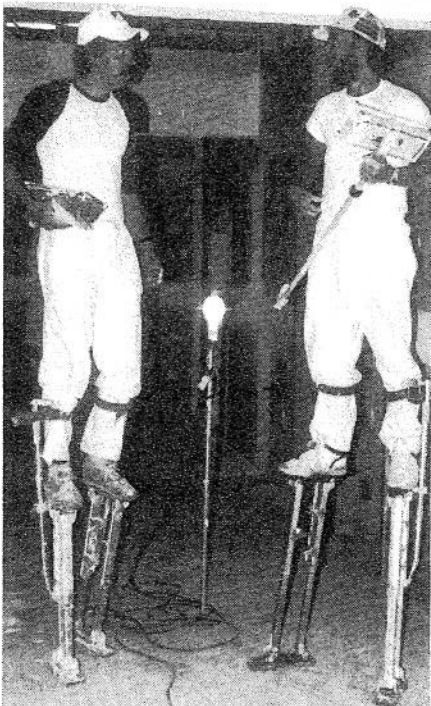
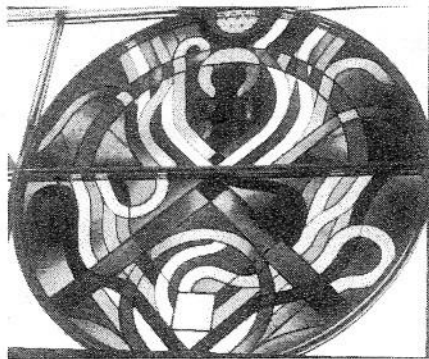
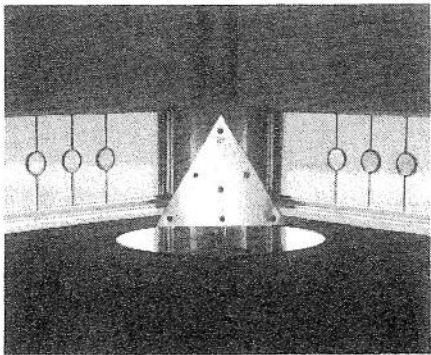
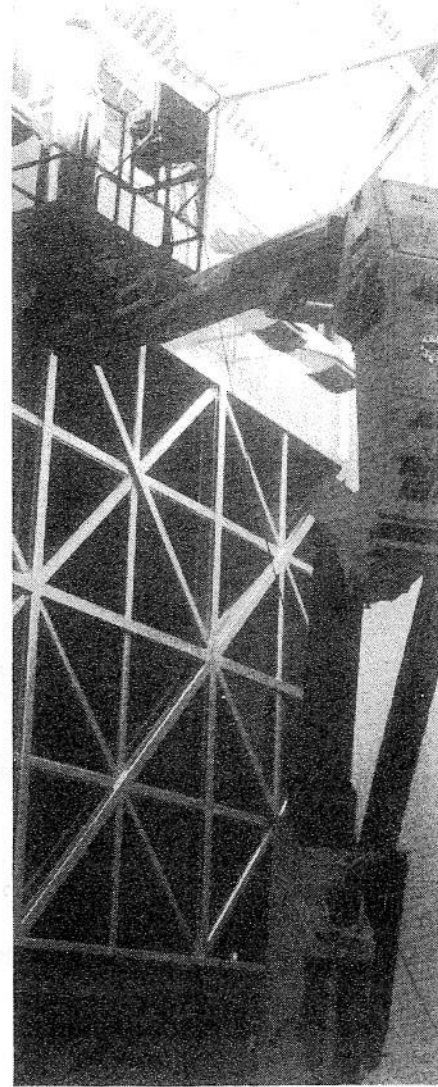
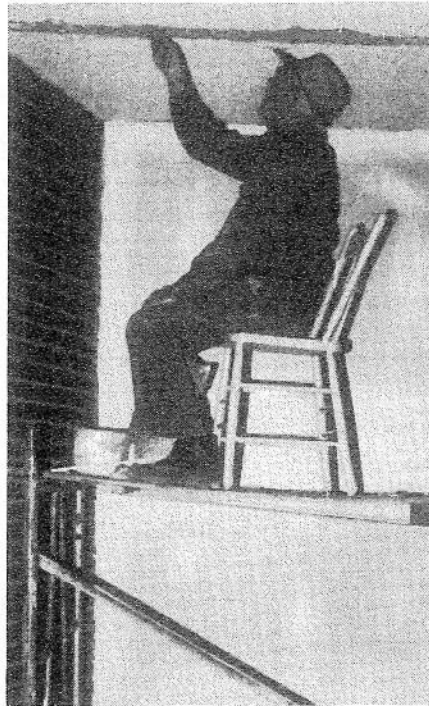
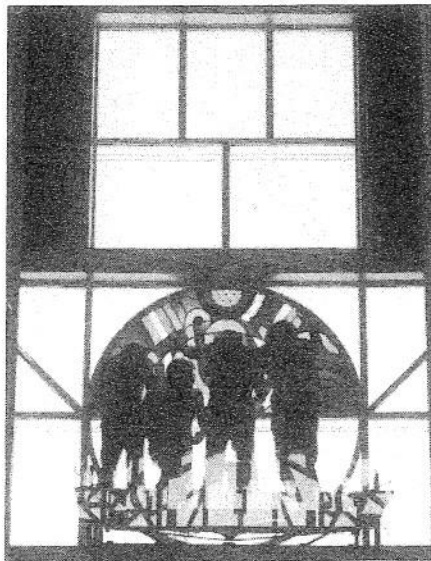


Mrs. Agnes (August) Toennies, housekeeper for Severin Hall, has become quite attached to our two parakeets, and has assumed the job of vacuuming seed shells and feathers from the floor. The two buggies were a gift to the community from two of last year's residence students: Jeff Chan of Edmonton and Liem Nguyen of Balgonie (near Regina).



Over 200 staff, Ursuline and Elizabethan sisters witnessed the blessing when all pastors were present to concelebrate.

Finishing the Abbey Church interior. . .



Monks involved in social justice

By Fr. Philip Loehr, OSB

The current deep interest of the monks of St. Peter's Abbey in social justice goes back at least to the early 1930s.

To highlight individually the monks who have been active in issues of social justice would result in a long series of biographies with much overlapping. Instead, our plan is to tell the story from about 1930 to the present, reporting on individual monks as they come into that history. That history will continue in future issues of this newsletter.

In the early 1930s the main event that touched off a special interest of the monks in social justice was the publication in 1931 of the second great social encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (Reconstructing the Social Order). It was issued by Pope Pius XI — as the Latin title indicates — on the 40th anniversary of the first social encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of Labour) issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891. This year we are celebrating the centenary of that first great social encyclical.

The fact that most of the world was in deep depression in 1931 had a lot to do with the timing of that second social encyclical, and with the issues that it raised.

Father Wilfred Hergott was by that time the editor of the *Prairie Messenger*, and he gave the encyclical a great deal of coverage. He also reported the developments in the church and in the world which were influenced in some way by that encyclical. In Canada one of those developments was the founding of the CCF party in 1932, the forerunner of the current NDP.

The two Canadian newspapers which gave the most balanced reporting on that party were *Father Wilfred's Prairie Messenger* and *Henry Somerville's Catholic Register*, published in Toronto. Somerville had grown up in England and remembered the controversies that greeted the rise of the Labour Party in that country. He saw many similarities with the controversies generated by the CCF.

Meanwhile at St. Peter's College

Father Francis Lohmer brought the study of Pius XI's encyclical into his Grade 11 religion class. **Father Matthew Michel** came back from studies at the Catholic University in Washington, D.C., at about that time. In his Grade 12 religion class he combined the study of the encyclical with a bit of elementary sociology. The students at that time did not yet grasp the importance of the social doctrine of the church, or of sociology, but those students did learn that they were important, and those classes prepared them for further reading and study along those lines.

In that era the monks of St. Peter's Abbey regularly went to St. John's Abbey at Collegeville, Minn., for their studies in philosophy and theology. There they came in contact with **Father Matthew's** cousin, **Father Virgil Michel**, who was dean of St. John's University and a professor of sociology. **Father Virgil** was a pioneer of the liturgical movement in the United States and also of the rural life movement in the Midwest United States. The national convention of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference was held at St. John's in 1941. **Father Virgil** did not live to see that convention, but one could sense that his spirit was there.

Meanwhile at St. Peter's Abbey **Father Wilfred's** *Prairie Messenger* continued to keep people abreast of social issues. **Father Francis Lohmer** also helped educate people of the area about co-operatives and credit unions.

With the recovery of the economy after World War II, and with relatively good times for farmers and local businessmen, few issues of social justice came to the fore during the immediate post-war years. However, by the early 1950s as farms got bigger and farm families got fewer, our rural abbacy began to be confronted by rural issues of social justice.

Father Philip Loehr was the first Rural Life director for the abbacy. He organized a few Rural Life conferences in Humboldt in the 1950s. His work on rural life issues and occasional writing in that field continued during

the time that **Father Augustine Nenzel** was Rural Life director.

In the early 1960s they were joined in that interest by Rev. Irving Fraser, the United Church minister newly arrived in Humboldt from rural Ontario. These three clergymen organized a few more Rural Life conferences.

It was at those conferences that school centralization came under discussion as both an effect and a cause of rural depopulation. Good roads and school buses had made it possible to centralize country schools into towns and villages. An important aim of those conferences was to keep that centralization within reasonable limits.

No one at that time dared to foresee the situation today when the rural population has declined to the point where only a few select communities can hope to keep their schools. However, **Bishop Klein** of Saskatoon, attending one of those early 1960s conferences, reported what was happening already then in the once populous St. Joseph's Colony at the west end of his diocese. In one rural parish that used to have 85 families all the land was already in the hands of only six farmers.

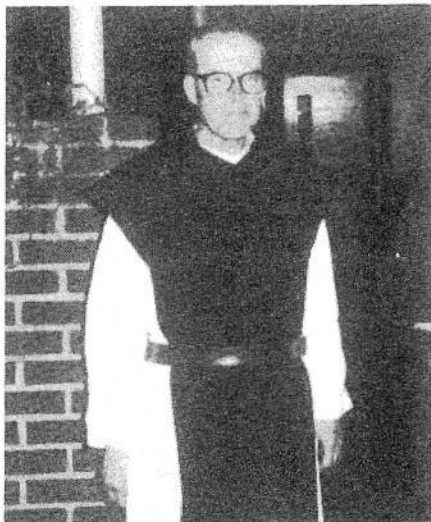
Meanwhile a new area of social justice was opening up at the abbey. During the years 1962 to 1965 both **Bishop Klein** and **Abbot Jerome Weber** had been attending sessions of the Second Vatican Council. This brought them into contact with bishops from the poor countries — the "Third World" as it began to be called.

The most persuasive of those bishops were those from eastern Brazil. They convinced the bishop and the abbot to give at least temporary help to that area of the world to tide it over its current shortage of priests, religious and other teachers of religion.

Abbot Jerome knew his history. He was aware of how in the early years of this century, when the present abbacy was still St. Peter's Colony within the Diocese of Prince Albert, monks had come from the United States and Europe to tide the colony over until home-grown vocations

would make it self-sufficient in pastors and later in teachers at St. Peter's College.

By 1943 the abbey and the abbacy were no longer in need of clergy from outside. Now it was eastern Brazil which was asking this type of help from the abbacy of Muenster and the Diocese of Saskatoon. Both Saskatoon and Muenster provided mission teams of priests, religious and laypeople to work in Brazil.



Fr. Leander Dosch, OCSO

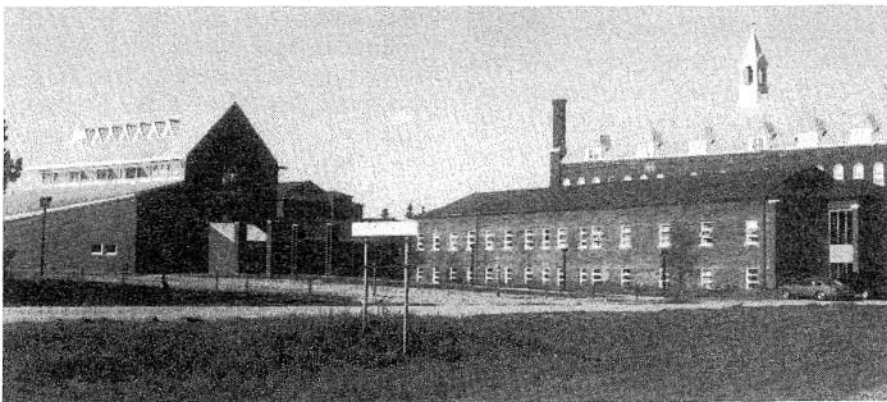
In 1966 two priests of the abbey, **Father Sylvester Vredegoor** and **Father Alvin Hergott**, along with some Ursuline sisters and Sisters of St. Elizabeth, prepared for their Brazil assignment by courses at the Latin American Institute in St. Mary's, Ont., conducted by Scarboro Father Jack McIvor.

A year later **Father Leander Dosch** took those courses and joined the Brazil team in early 1968.

Right from the start our mission team found Brazil, with its troubled political, economic and social history, a veritable laboratory course in social justice.

(To be continued in an upcoming issue.)

This article was prepared by Father Philip Loehr, OSB, who is engaged in social justice today.



Rest in peace

The following deaths have occurred since the last newsletter:
Earl Fortney, brother of Br. Francis Fortney, in early November 1990.
Paul McAllister, brother of Br. Michael McAllister, on April 18, 1991.
Martin Leuschen, aged 71 of Bruno, died May 11, 1991, Oblate of St. Benedict, attached to St. Peter's Abbey.

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