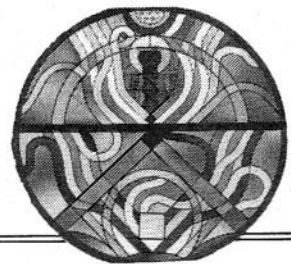




St. Peter's Abbey Newsletter

Vol. 15, No. 2 Spring/Summer 1992



Former college rector dies



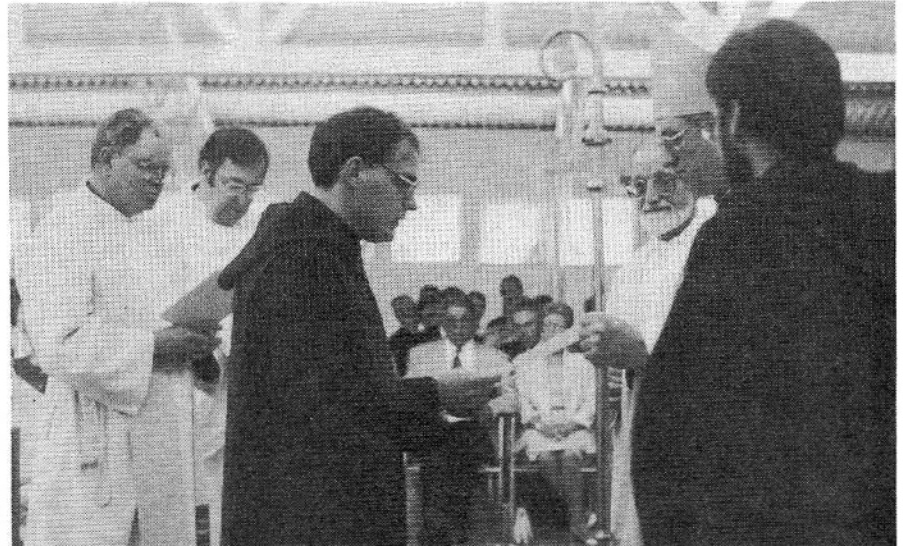
Fr. Xavier Benning in a familiar pose during his latter years.

Father Xavier Benning, 90, long-time rector of St. Peter's College, died on June 11 in St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Humboldt.

Father Xavier was widely known as rector of the college, serving in that position for 25 years, from 1935 to 1960. He was prefect of discipline for 75-80 high school boys in residence during these years. While former students may remember him as a stern prefect, those who knew Fr. Xavier in his final years saw him as a gentle, hard-working, faithful monk and pastor.

Father Xavier (Elmer) Benning was born in Arcadia, Wis., in 1901. He was one of the group of students at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minn., who answered the appeal of Abbot Michael Ott for missionary-minded young men to staff St. Peter's College, still in construction at the time, and to

Celebrations in 1992



Br. Demetrius J. Wasylyniuk reads his profession of vows before Abbot Peter Novecosky. Pictured are: Abbot Jerome Weber (seated), Fr. Albert Ruetz (Junior Master & Prior), Deacon Richard Meidl, Br. Demetrius, Fr. James Gray (witness), Abbot Peter and Br. Randy Senecal (witness). (See page 2 for related story.)



Fr. Richard's immediate family following his ordination; from left: Raymond Meidl, Kamloops, B.C.; Mrs. Harlinda Meidl, Dauphin, Man.; Marian Garlinski, Ashville, Man.; Fr. Richard; Betty Ann Wickstrom, Dauphin; and Leonard Meidl, St. Eustache, Man. (See page 5 for related story.)

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Demetrius Joseph Wasylyniuk makes solemn profession

On July 11, Brother Demetrius Wasylyniuk of Watrous, Sask., made his final commitment on the Feast of St. Benedict in the Abbey Church of Sts. Peter & Paul.

In the presence of Abbot Peter and the monastic community of St. Peter's, Br. Demetrius completed his four monastic years of formation by pronouncing the three Benedictine vows of obedience, stability and conversion of life. Witnessing the ceremony were his mother, Elsa, and twin brother, Alec, who farm near Watrous. Also present were 125 other family members, friends and staff of St. Peter's.

Joseph Wasylyniuk was born Feb. 13, 1958, in Regina. Joseph was a licensed mortician for a number of years before he entered the monastery, and is widely known across the province of Saskatchewan. He came to St. Peter's College for one year of college while

residing in the student residence of Severin Hall guestwing. In 1987 he entered St. Peter's Abbey and pronounced his first vows on July 11, 1989. During the novitiate his father, Joseph Wasylyniuk, passed away.

During the first two years of temporary vows Br. Demetrius attended Mt. Angel Seminary, residing in Mt. Angel Abbey, taking a two-year pre-theology program. The last year of his formation was spent at St. Peter's, where he worked at various tasks — mainly in the business office, the guest department, the bee hives and as abbey infirmarian.

It was as infirmarian and beekeeper that Br. Demetrius came to know his "mentor," Fr. Xavier Benning so well before he died on June 11. Br. Demetrius, who suffers from severe arthritis himself, has an exceptional devotion and commitment to the sick and infirm.



Tony Benning, last remaining brother of Fr. Xavier, in wheelchair, escorted by Br. Randy Senecal, and Abbot Peter Novecosky following the solemn profession of Br. Demetrius.

On Aug. 27, after long hours of extracting honey from the beehives, Br. Demetrius returned to Mt. Angel to begin four years of theology.

Fr. Xavier

Continued from page 1

augment the meagre workforce of St. Peter's Abbey to provide pastoral care for the parishes of St. Peter's Colony.

Four members of Fr. Xavier's family came to Canada. Three became monks, Father Leonard (died in 1970), Father Edward (died in 1988), and Anthony, who later married and raised a large family. Father Xavier often thanked his brother Tony for his nieces and nephews.

He entered the Benedictine community of St. Peter's Abbey in June 1923 and

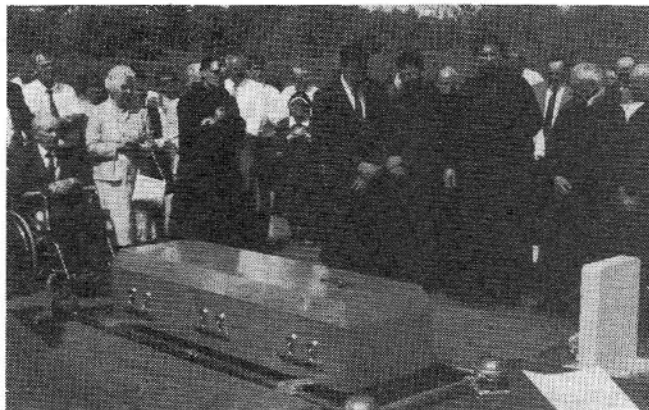
was ordained to the priesthood on June 29, 1928, by Bishop Joseph Prud'homme of Prince Albert. However, immediately after his first monastic profession in 1924 he joined the teaching staff, on which he remained for the next 44 years. He taught a variety of subjects, from piano to Latin, in which he was highly esteemed for the thoroughness and clarity of his approach, and for his unbounded patience.

Fr. Xavier also held positions in the monastery during these years — sub-prior, prior, novice master — and he served as pastor of St. Scholastica and St. Gertrude parishes in the abbacy.

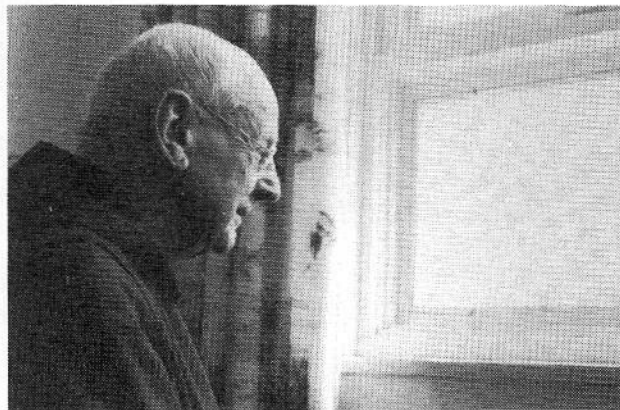
Of the many contributions which Fr.

Xavier made to St. Peter's, the one that is most noticeable and most widely appreciated is the complex of evergreens, flower beds, orchard and beeyard which constitutes the abbey grounds. Even in his 90th year he cared for the bees, collected crab apples, and drove his "mini" tractor to cultivate between the tall evergreens.

To visitors and students alike, to his fellow card-playing monks, parishioners and relatives, the forest of evergreens surrounding St. Peter's, on what was bald prairie, is a standing ovation to Fr. Xavier's astonishingly tireless service to his community.



Fr. Xavier Benning is laid to rest in the abbey cemetery. His only remaining brother, Tony Benning, is in the wheelchair at the foot of the grave.



Fr. Xavier took a keen interest in the construction of the new abbey church which he is observing in the photo above.

Sister Martina, OSE, dies at 81

Sister Mary Martina Gramlich died quietly in her room on July 13, at St. Elizabeth Convent in Humboldt at the age of 81.

Sr. Martina grew up on a farm south of Macklin, Sask., in a family of 12. After her father's death her mother remarried and the family grew by another seven.

In 1929 Bernadette, as she was called, entered the convent of the Franciscan Sisters of St. Elizabeth, and at investiture received the name Sister Mary Martina. Last year she celebrated her diamond jubilee of profession.

An expert seamstress, Sister Martina worked for many years in the laundry and the sewing room at St. Peter's College, tailoring many of the monks'

habits. She also served at St. Thomas College in Battleford, hospitals in Macklin and Cudworth, Sask, and finally in St. Elizabeth's Convent, Humboldt.

She was superior of St. Ann's Nursing Home when it opened on Clarence Avenue in Saskatoon, and also served as a nurses' aide. From 1985 to 1990 she was semi-retired at St. Scholastica's

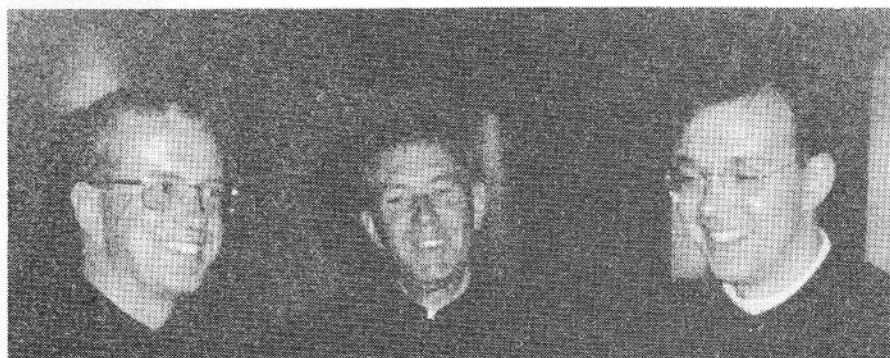
Convent on the abbey grounds, where she continued to use her skills as a seamstress.

Sister Martina will be remembered by the monks and staff of St. Peter's as a gentle, happy and friendly religious, who often expressed appreciation for even the most minor care and concern given her.

Funeral services were held in St. Augustine's Church; interment was in St. Elizabeth Convent cemetery in Humboldt.

First abbot of Westminster Abbey dies

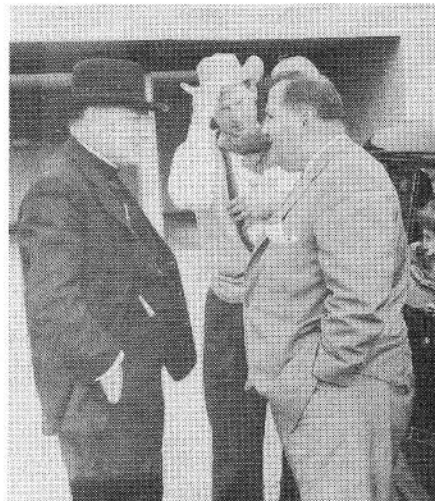
The longest-reigning abbot of the Swiss-American congregation of Benedictines, Abbot Eugene Medved of Westminster Abbey, near Mission, B.C., died on March 30 at the age of 84.



Members of the English Benedictine Congregation who attended the Benedictine Musicians' conference at St. Meinrad Archabbey are, from left: Frs. Patrick Fludder and Philip Gaisford of Worth Abbey, England, and Br. Placid Hamblen of St. Louis Abbey, Mo. Fr. Patrick is the director of the Worth Abbey Lay Community begun some 20 years ago. Fr. Philip is the Worth Abbey composer who demonstrated some of his compositions during the musicians' conference. Br. Placid is an accomplished, young organist.



From left: Tom Owens, Regina; Fr. Andrew Britz, Muenster; Fr. Don Bolen, Estevan; Fr. Stefano Penna, Saskatoon, and Vince Morrison, Regina, met at St. Peter's Abbey to organize for the six-year program of catechetics instruction for teachers in the Catholic school system. The "Understanding Your Faith" project organizers above have chosen the theme of Christology for the coming year. The theme of the program just ended was Sacred Scripture.



Abbot Eugene Medved in his familiar bowler hat pictured with former seminary students Terry Wheatley of Vancouver and Tommy Lamonthe of Ottawa. Photo was taken in the late '50s by former student, Gerald Moran.

Abbot Eugene was one of the founders of the Benedictine community which has Mt. Angel Abbey in Oregon as its motherhouse. He first served as rector of the Seminary of Christ the King, the community's main apostolate. He was elected abbot on Feb. 24, 1953, and held the position for 39 years.

Aside from numerous building projects, Abbot Eugene's priorities for his community were a Christo-centric community life according to the Rule of St. Benedict, the liturgy and priestly formation according to the mind of the Apostolic See.

Abbot Jerome Weber, OSB, retired abbot of St. Peter's Abbey, represented Abbot Peter Novocosky and the community at Abbot Eugene's funeral on April 3.

Tibetan Buddhist monks visit St. Peter's Abbey

His Eminence Amchok Rinpoche and his travelling companion Lhudup visited St. Peter's Abbey with their escort, James Mullens of the religious studies department, University of Saskatchewan.

This is Amchok Rinpoche's second visit to Canada and the first for Lhudup. They arrived in January of this year and have visited Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Montreal and the New England States in the U.S.A. where they have given lectures. Some members of their tour group are engaged in fund-raising for their monastery hostels in India. They were also invited by Canadian Buddhist groups who lend their support through medicine, food and clothing for the hostels.

Lhudup has been a monk since 1984 and is 35 years of age.

He is involved with training in per-

fection of patience, perseverance, generosity, wisdom, morality (altruism) and the main quality characteristic of

the Tibetan monks, compassion. He is also involved in the study of philosophy, scriptures and meditation.



A group of Buddhist meditators from Saskatoon were guests of the abbey. The retreat was sponsored by the Saskatoon Buddhist Association based at the University of Saskatchewan.

Alternative crop demonstration

A 40-crop demonstration plot was planted on abbey land just off #5 highway outside of Muenster this year.

The crops were planted by the A.D.D. Board District #21 of Watson under the supervision of Norm Jansen and Michael Zentner. The purpose of the plot was to let farmers see how alternate crops would grow in this area.

The Squires of Muenster helped Abbot Peter in keeping the plot free of

weeds during the summer and they will use the money for their charities.

Some of the crops planted included seven varieties of field peas, five varieties of lentils, five varieties of beans and four varieties of Sunola.

A demonstration night on Aug. 11 attracted over 70 people to the plot and a tour of the abbey after. It is estimated that 300-400 people visited the site over the summer.



Tri-community day

The feast of the Transfiguration, Aug. 6, was the day the three communities gathered at St. Peter's Abbey for their annual summer get-together.

The three religious orders, the Ursulines, Elizabethans and Benedictines, met in the abbey church for eucharist with Abbot Peter Novacosky as celebrant at 4:30 p.m. This was followed by an evening dinner and socializing. Before the office of Compline was recited at 8 p.m., the Benedictines performed skits and musical selections for entertainment.

Monk receives masters degree

Brother Kurt van Kuren received the master of arts degree in East/West psychology on June 27. He is now completing his thesis on meditation as a requirement for this degree from the California Institute of Integral Studies, located in San Francisco, Calif.

Br. Kurt is a full-time psychology professor in St. Peter's College and assistant dean.

Richard Meidl, OSB, ordained for the abbacy

By Pat Novecosky

For only the second time in more than 20 years, a Benedictine priest was ordained in St. Peter's Abbey. Father Richard Meidl was ordained Aug. 15 at St. Peter's Cathedral by Regina Archbishop Charles Halpin.

Although ordinations in the abbacy are rare, Father Richard said in an interview that there is a new breed of priests joining the ranks. In 1989, Father William Thurmeier became the first priest ordained in the abbacy since 1970, when Abbot Peter Novecosky, Father Bernard Stauber and Father Damian Yaskowich were ordained.

When Richard Meidl received his education certificate from the University of Manitoba in 1967, the Cud-

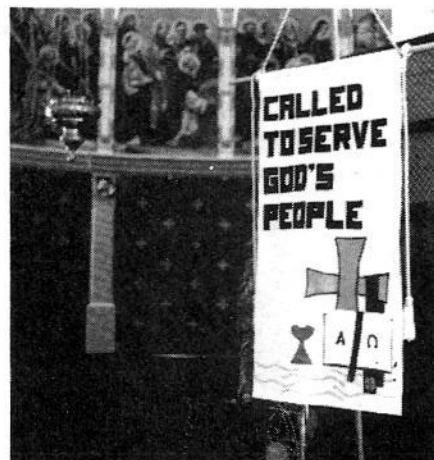
worth, Sask., native began his teaching career in Winnipeg. He later went on to receive his arts and education degrees from the University of Manitoba.

But it wasn't until he became active in lay ministry in Regina 15 years later that he acted on his call to the priesthood. "When I was working in lay ministry I decided to give it a try and see if the call was really there," he said.

Richard joined the abbacy's Benedictine community in January 1986, at the age of 40.

"It wasn't the best first year. It wasn't easy but I was really comfortable here," he said. "The monastic routine became part of my life."

After five years of studying at St. Meinrad School of Theology in Indiana and being ordained to the priesthood,

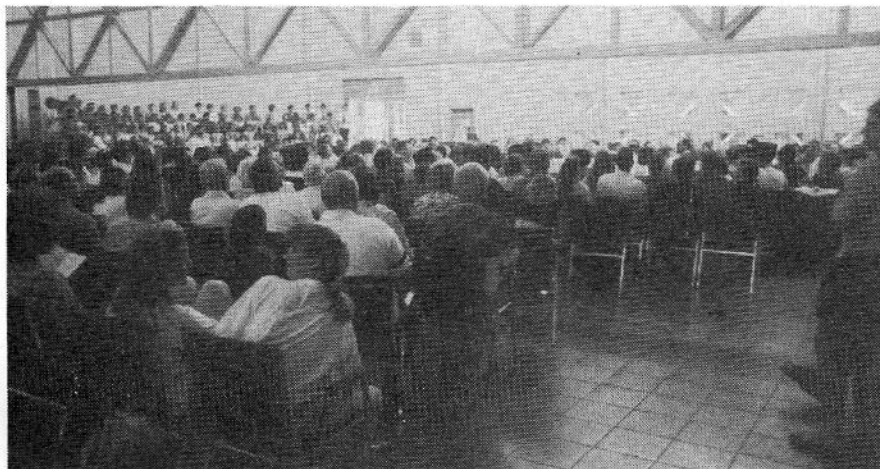


This banner hung in St. Peter's Cathedral during the ordination of Fr. Richard Meidl. It was made by his sisters, Betty Ann Wickstrom and Marian Garlinski.

Br. Richard said he feels a sense of completion. "But I realize there's a lot for me to do in the future. And I'm looking forward to that."

Father Richard will return to the town of his birth for his first assignment. He will act as assistant pastor at Cudworth and St. Benedict. He will also be active in campus ministry at St. Peter's College and vocation director for St. Peter's Abbey.

(Pat Novecosky is an alumnus of St. Peter's College. - Ed)



Final concert of the Junior Choir Camp in Sts. Peter & Paul Abbey Church held in July.



Fr. Matthew Michel, 95, displays his souvenir autographed baseball to members of the Junior Choir Camp.



Children of all ages attended the Saskatchewan Choral Federation's Choir Camps this July. Regina University Professor Lynn Channing holds a tired youngster during the final performance in Sts. Peter & Paul Abbey Church.

An ancient form of contemplative prayer

By Paul T. Harris

Recently I met one evening with a diverse group of people in the basement of a house on King Edward Avenue in downtown Ottawa. There were two Sacred Heart sisters, a physician, an accountant, a Bell Canada employee, a physiotherapist and, as one might expect in the nation's capital, a number of public servants. Was this a meeting of some new investment group? The cast of an Agatha Christie plot? Not quite.

As improbable as it may seem we were a Christian meditation group following the prayer tradition of St. John Cassian, the fourth-century desert fathers and other spiritual guides through the centuries, in seeking God in the silence and stillness beyond word or thought — the path of contemplative prayer. In a noisy world increasingly aware of the need for interiority and depth, the way of Christian meditation speaks to many contemporary men and women with the authority of a path that is rooted in both Christian tradition and authentic experience.

It was Father John Main who brought to light the ancient tradition of contemplative prayer using a mantra as taught by St. John Cassian and the tradition of the desert fathers. John Main integrated this tradition with the prayer teaching of the Cloud of Unknowing, his own experience of eastern spirituality and has grounded Christian meditation in the Gospels and St. Paul. He has left a teaching on prayer that has touched the lives and hearts of thousands of ordinary people around the world.

In the group meeting I attended, John Main's taped talk from his widely used "communitas series" was followed by 25 minutes of silent meditation, a little more music at the end of meditation and a short period for any questions. Then it was back to our homes, refreshed by the quality of stillness lost to so many modern-day people. We were rediscovering in the Ottawa group meeting what the psalmist said: "Be still and know that I am God".

In the silence of our meditation all class distinctions, varying religious be-

liefs, age and gender differences melted away as we shared the ultimate reality of the presence of Christ in faith. Christian meditation groups seem to attract people with diverse backgrounds, from members of Alcoholics Anonymous, social activists and peace-niks, to ordinary working men and women with family responsibilities.

To come to that interior silence and stillness in knowing God and in knowing ourselves we were entering the experience of Christian meditation. "Meditation" literally means "remaining still in the Centre." But to come to that stillness requires labor and discipline.

The teaching of meditation is built upon a simple principle, one understood by the saints and many theologians, namely, that our finite minds cannot grasp the infinity of God. Theology, philosophy or any other form of knowledge only tells us things about God. They do not bring us into contact with God. Theology gives us information about but not the reality itself.

God simply cannot be grasped by thought or the senses. The senses are bound to the world of space and time, and God is beyond space and time. In silence we come to the direct, immediate and intuitive knowledge and love of God.

Weekly meetings in a group are an important commitment. Our human experience tells us that meeting with others on a common pilgrimage can give meditators the support they need to carry on the journey and fidelity to their twice-daily times of meditation. The weekly meditation group meeting promotes a spiritual bond among the members and is really a community of faith, much like the early Christian Communities in St. Paul's time.

In addition to entering directly into the "experience" of meditation, the group teaches newcomers how to meditate while giving support and encouragement to meditators to be faithful to their twice daily times of meditation.

Not only at the group meeting in Ottawa but all around the world a "motley crew" of meditators join together once a week in meditation groups to

seek the Lord in silence and stillness. The way of Christian meditation is drawing more and more people to the authenticity of a path of prayer rooted in tradition, simplicity and daily discipline.

For information on meditation or location of groups in Canada contact the guestmaster at St. Peter's Abbey at 682-2581.

Paul Harris, a layperson, is a former executive director of the Catholic Information Centre, Toronto. For the past seven years he has been involved in the teaching of Christian meditation around the world. Paul will direct the Christian Meditation Retreat scheduled for Feb. 12 - 14, 1993, at St. Peter's Abbey.

Christian Meditation Retreat

February 12 - 14, 1993

in the

Abbey Guestwing
Severin Hall.

Retreat directed according to the prayer tradition of John Cassian by PAUL HARRIS of Ottawa, formerly of the Christian Meditation Center in London, England.

Suggested donation:

for live-ins — \$90.00

for commuters: \$50.00

(includes noon meal)

**Write St. Peter's
or phone 682-2581.**

St. Peter's College Report

By Tony Saretsky, director

After the record number of students that enrolled last year, we at St. Peter's wondered what 1992-93 would hold in store for us. At the time of writing 225 full-time and part-time students have registered. This surpasses last year's total of 152.

The increase can be partly attributed to the increased offering in second-year

classes. While only one senior-level natural science class is offered, there are several choices in the area of the humanities and social sciences. Students in these areas are able to choose classes in English, history, psychology and sociology. Thus, a good start can be made toward a degree.

With an increased size in the student body, other facets of college operations are affected. More space must be made available and more instructors must be contracted. In addition, a student coordinator has been hired. As well, a campus ministry team has been assembled consisting of Sisters Maureen Maier and Thomas Bernhard and Father Richard Meidl.

Over the past three months Dean Deborah Sarauer has been interviewing students and counselling them into their classes. She indicates that, again this year, St. Peter's has attracted an increased number of students from outside St. Peter's Abbey.

Cheryl Wourms, who replaced Sandra Twardy in the office as secretary/registrar, has made the transition smoothly and effectively. Cheryl worked with Brenda McNabb in the library before moving to the office of secretary. In addition, Jenny Irwin has joined our staff and works in the library and bookstore. She is also able to assist

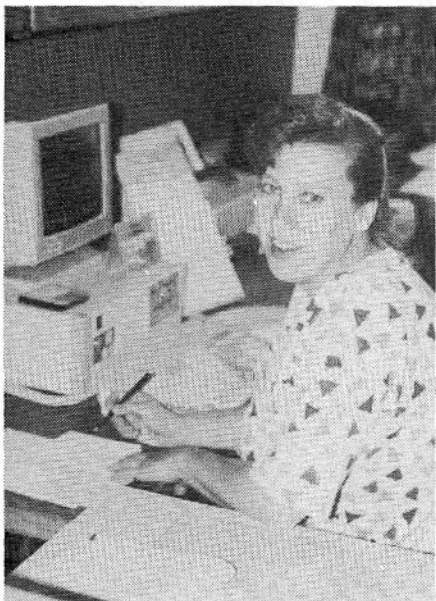


Jenny Irwin in the college bookstore getting ready for the new school term which begins on Sept. 9.

with secretarial duties.

The most notable physical change that visitors will encounter when coming to the college is the relocation of the library. The library has been moved and now occupies the former chapel (the check-out and study area) and the space beneath it (the stacks). The move will give the library a more central focus.

The staff of the college looks forward to an interesting, exciting and faith-filled year.



Cheryl Wourms, new college secretary, at her desk in the director's office.

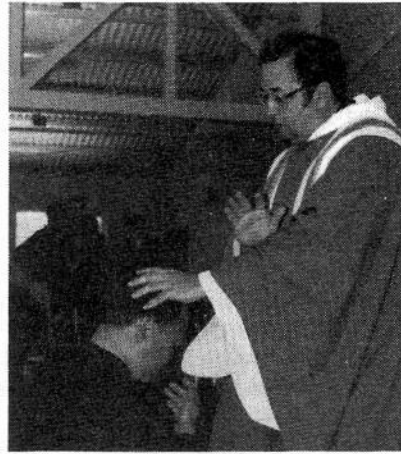
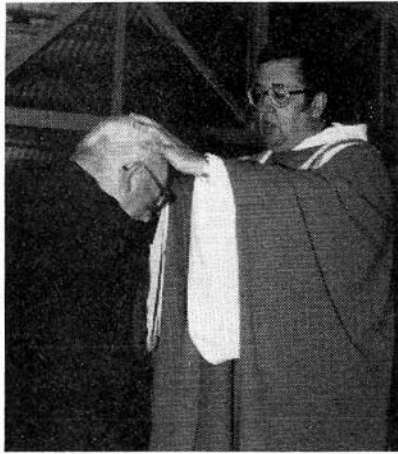


On the occasion of their retirement, college staff and monks bid farewell to Stan Pesowski and Sandra Twardy at a formal dinner in April. Sandra and Stan are about to attack the decorated cake which they shared with everyone present. Stan was a college janitor who took great pride in his waxed wooden floors. Sandra was an energetic and competent college secretary for almost 10 years. She worked in the library and at St. Peter's Press before working in the director's office of the college.

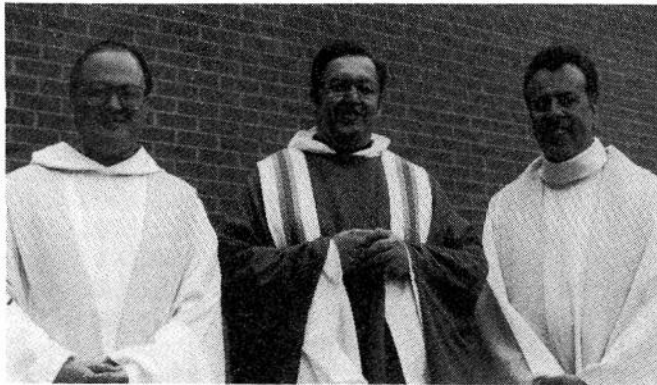


During the monks' annual retreat, commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the founding of Cluny Priory in Illinois was made with Vespers sung in the abbey cemetery. The first prior, Oswald Moosmueller, is buried at the grave stone nearest the camera.

Ordination and profession celebrations



Fr. Richard imparts blessing to Br. Gregory Brodner, OSB, Br. Anthony Nguyen, OSB, and Elizabeth Saretsky.



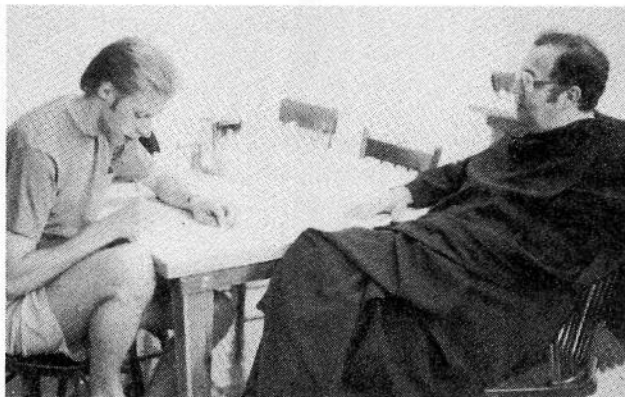
Concelebrants for Fr. Richard Meidl's first mass were: Fr. Mark O'Keefe of St. Meinrad Archabbey, where Fr. Richard studied theology, and Fr. John Boeglin of Celestine, Indiana, where Fr. Richard did pastoral work as part of the seminary training.



Elsa Wasylyniuk, Br. Demetrius, Abbot Peter, and twin brother Alec Wasylyniuk.



Br. Demetrius and his mother Elsa Wasylyniuk on profession day.

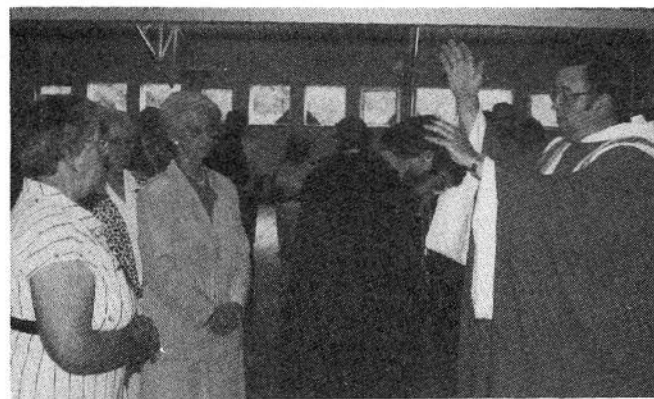
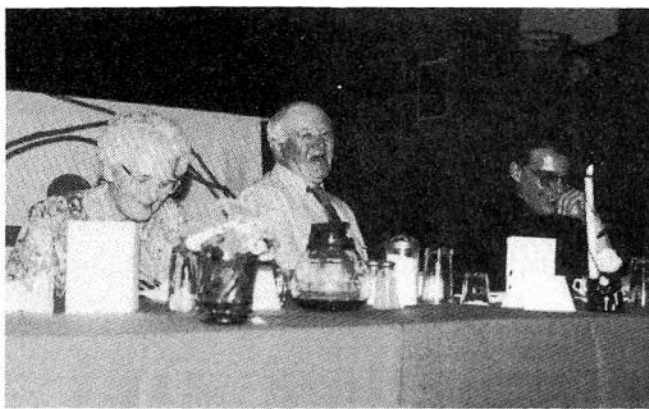


Fr. Richard being interviewed by the Prairie Messenger Regina associate editor, Pat Novacosky.



Fr. Richard cuts the inevitable celebration cake.

at St. Peter's Abbey



Br. Demetrius with relatives and friends from Lacey, Washington.



Pastoral appointments in the diocese

The following changes and appointments became effective on Aug. 2, 1992:

Fr. Albert Ruetz to Carmel and Peterson, (resides at the abbey);

Fr. Andrew Britz to Humboldt and is the new vicar general (residing at the abbey);

Lawrence DeMong to Humboldt as resident pastor;

Fr. Martin Brodner becomes pastor of Bruno, and chaplain for the Ursulines; Fr. Harvey Wingfield assumes St. Gregor Parish in addition to Englefeld where he has been stationed for two years;

Fr. Richard Meidl, while assisting Fr. Werner, is in charge of St. Benedict; Fr. Roman Schneider became pastor of Muenster and now resides at the abbey;

Fr. Werner Renneberg is now pastor of Cudworth.

The "biggest" change in appointments is Fr. Leo Hinz moving to Regina to work in the marriage tribunal office.

Benedictines celebrate jubilees

Four Benedictines from St. Peter's Abbey celebrated jubilees of religious profession July 21 at a special mass and social organized for the occasion. From left: Fathers Roman Schneider, 50th;

Francis Lohmer, 70th; Abbot Peter Novecosky (second year as abbot); Father Matthew Michel, 75th; Brother Gregory Brodner, 60th. Fr. Matthew is 95 years of age.



Profession anniversaries in 1992 include: Frs. Roman Schneider, Francis Lohmer, Matthew Michel and Br. Gregory Brodner, with Abbot Peter Novecosky in the centre.

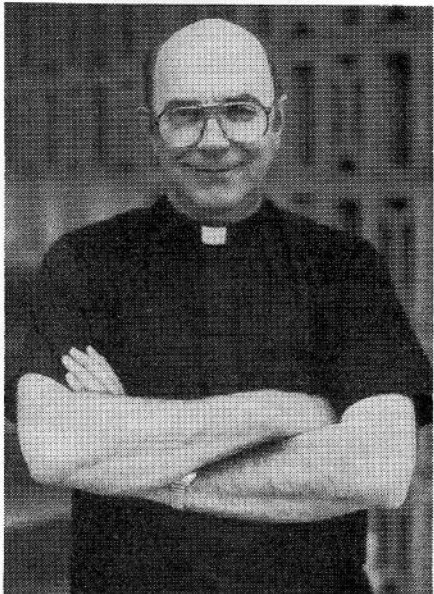


New candidates

Three new candidates have applied for the postulancy program at the abbey which began on Sept. 14. They are, left to right, George Perron of Swift Current, Jan Bron of Calgary and Ernest Courneyea of Somerset, Man. Pictured with the candidates is their novice master, Fr. William Thurmeier. The postulancy program will go to the end of February 1993 and the novitiate begins on March 21.



Celebrating their 50th anniversary of ordination are Frs. Martin Brodner, Philip Loehr and George Brodner. Fr. Martin's ordination was delayed one year due to illness, but all three were in the same seminary class.



Fr. Bernard de Margerie of Saskatoon was retreat director for the monks in June of this year.

Meditation an aid to self-knowledge

By Father Lawrence E. Mick

From the Jewish Hasidim comes the story of a man who could never remember in the morning where he put his clothes the night before.

So one night as he undressed for bed he made a list noting where he put each item of clothing. When he awoke he was able, with the help of his notes, to find his shirt, his pants, his socks and his shoes.

But when he was fully dressed, he became disturbed and muttered to himself, "I know where my shirt is, I know where my shoes are, I know where all my clothes are, but where am I myself?"

He looked and looked and couldn't find himself. "And that," said the rabbi, "is how it is with us."

A sense of ourselves

We may all be able to find our clothes, and we may know where our bodies are, but in the hectic pace of contemporary life we easily lose a sense of ourselves — of where we are and where we are going.

Meditation helps us find ourselves.

Many people who hear the word "meditation" think immediately of an eastern guru sitting in the lotus position with eyes closed and chanting "OM"

over and over. But the word covers a multitude of styles and practices.

One person might adopt points from eastern styles and spend an hour each day meditating that way. Another might meditate for 15 minutes each morning, using a passage from the Bible as a basis for reflection. Another person might take a slow walk or sit on the rocks by the sea as a time for reflection.

Busy people

Most people I know, however, find it hard to take time out from the burdens of daily responsibilities to be alone and quiet.

Still, perhaps the busiest people need meditation the most. The key to integrating meditation into a busy lifestyle is to abandon preconceived notions of what it requires.

The place for meditation can be a church, the woods, a quiet room or a hermitage, but it can also be a car, a bathroom, a kitchen, a busy street corner or a crowded mall. The time can be an hour in the morning or several days of retreat, but it can also be five minutes between appointments or 10 minutes while driving to pick up the children.

The style might be quite formal. But it might also be simply getting in touch with my own feelings at the mo-

ment, or pausing to take in the beauty of a flower or a child.

Each person needs to be creative enough to find the time and place and style that works best for them.

God dwells within

Meditation, however, is not just about being in touch with ourselves. The 11th step in the 12-Steps program for Alcoholics Anonymous speaks of seeking "through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and for the power to carry it out."

Christians believe that the God they worship also dwells within them. So when we are in touch with ourselves we find God at the centre of our being. That is why meditation can merge into prayer, giving us peace and a sense of focus in life.

Touching base with ourselves and with the God who dwells in us enables us to cope much more effectively and enjoyably with whatever stress and strain life brings our way. What matters is that we touch base often enough not to get lost in the confusion around us.

(This article appeared in the March 30/92 issue of the *Prairie Messenger*.)

ABBEY VOLUNTEERS

An opportunity for Volunteers as Abbey Switchboard Operators is open to Oblates and local residents, evenings and weekends.

* Must have pleasant and friendly phone technique, and be able to take messages accurately.

* For benefits and further information contact:

Guestmaster
between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Phone 682-2581



Local high school and university students help with the garden harvest again this summer. Posing are Garret, Raymond and Vanessa.

Oblate news

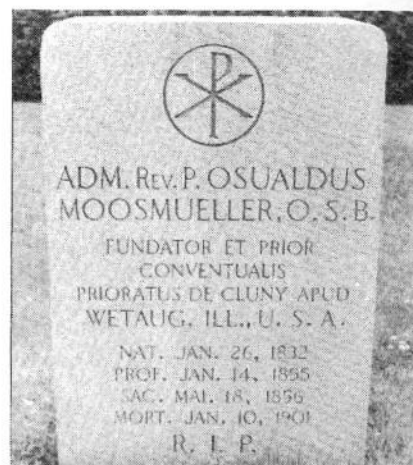
By Fr. Albert Ruetz, Oblate Director

Alex Kondorosi, Saskatoon, after a year as an Oblate candidate, made his Final Oblation during the mass on Oblate Day, June 22, 1992.

During the year as a candidate, Oblates try to live the Guidelines for Oblates to see if this is a help to live their Christian life. For example, they see if the Prayer of the Church, especially Morning and Evening Prayer, is the type of prayer that is compatible with their lifestyle. "Oblates strive each

day to pray some part of the Divine Office or Liturgy of the Hours, as the circumstances in their lives permit." (Guidelines).

Phyllis Thompson, Saskatoon, was also enrolled as an Oblate Candidate on June 22. Rose Marie Fowler, St. Albert, Alta., was enrolled as an Oblate Candidate on Aug. 8, 1992.



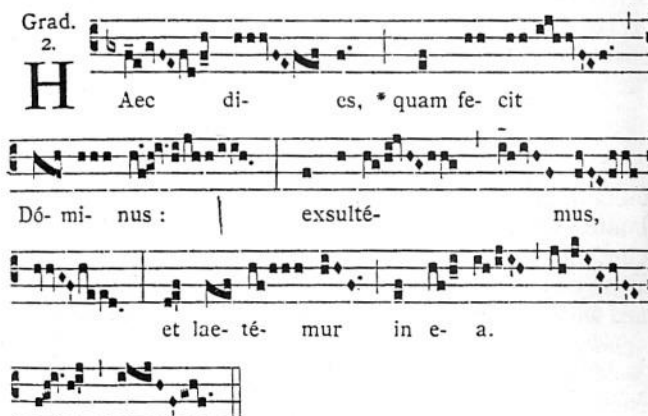
Grave marker of Prior Oswald Moosmueller.



On July 5, 1992, Bishop Paul O'Byrne of Calgary was a concelebrant at our Sunday eucharist. Other concelebrants shown are: Fr. Norbert Schwinghammer, Fr. William Thurmeier, with Fr. James Gray as chief celebrant. This was Bishop Paul's first visit to St. Peter's Abbey.



Rose Marie Fowler of Edmonton entered the Oblate candidate program during a Vesper service. Shown with Rose Marie are Abbot Peter, Abbot Jerome and Oblate director, Fr. Albert Ruetz.



Seven monks from St. Peter's Abbey participated in an evening of Scriptural prayer and music, featuring contemporary and traditional chants, on March 5, 1992, at Holy Spirit Church in Saskatoon. The monks chose the Vesper service of the day, and Taize chants, directed by Christa Walsh, began and ended the worship service.



Local religious superiors met with Abbot Peter Novocosky at the abbey.

Saskatchewan writers' guild returns

(The following letter was received from an artist who spent two weeks in St. Scholastica Residence as a member of the Sask. Writers' Guild Colony.)

I would like to thank you for the gracious hospitality extended to Annette and myself during our artist's Retreat, June 1 - 14. It was a new experience for me, one that I would like to try again. Over the years I have attended many workshops and seminars,

coming away with stacks of material and ideas to try and sometimes suffering from "sensory overload." The individual retreat was a great opportunity to try some of those ideas that have been sitting on the shelf. It was a great opportunity to analyse my thoughts on various subjects and draw some conclusions about my work habits. Over the years my major problem has been a short attention span. The individual retreat provided me with some insight

in that regard and I am looking forward to gaining a lot more from my experiences in the future.

I must confess that it took a little while to get used to the peace and quiet. Another time, I would be more prepared.

In short, the retreat was a very worthwhile experience and I feel that I have gained a lot from it. The fact that the surroundings were so pleasant was an added bonus. Thank you for everything!

Yours sincerely,
Pauline A. Braun
Thompson, MB



Participants in the School of Human Justice held at St. Peter's and sponsored by the University of Regina.



All facilities of the guest department, including outdoor camping in the woods, were used for the School of Human Justice.



Br. Bernard Lange's assistant on the farm, Harold Dyck, welded steps and railing for the circular staircase in the renovated library. The former chapel will be the new college/abbey library location — which it was originally designed to be — and plans are to have it open on the first day of college classes, Sept. 9, 1992.

Abbot Peter's father dies

Martin Novecosky died peacefully at his home in Humboldt on May 25. Mr. Novecosky was born in Humboldt on Dec. 12, 1907, and lived most of his life on a farm one mile from Burr, about 20 miles south of Humboldt.

He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth, five daughters and three sons. The youngest member of the family is Abbot Peter of St. Peter's Abbey.

College symposium: 'Images the future'

By John Thompson, president of St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon

From Friday evening through early afternoon of Saturday, June 5 - 6, nearly 40 persons met at St. Peter's College to "dream" about its future. Monks and students, faculty and friends, alumni and administrators spoke of their hopes for the college.

The occasion was one of taking stock and looking ahead at what was called a "crossroads." A number of faculty are expressing a desire to be more closely involved with St. Peter's College. There is a sense that something new is happening.

Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB, president of St. Peter's College, opened the Friday evening session with a prayer and welcomed those attending.

As chairperson of St. Peter's Executive Council, Father Andrew Britz, OSB, spoke on the background of St. Peter's College and its current opportunities. He touched on topics from government funding and an association of faculty, to a chaplaincy program and a board more representative of the college constituencies. He challenged participants to "dream" about a future for St. Peter's College.

College dean Deborah Sarauer invited the panelists and participants to consider three questions. First, what do you see as good that we should celebrate? Second, where would you like to see the college in five years? Third, what are the challenges we face in building the college's future?

Panelists Tony Saretsky, director of St. Peter's College, Tim Lilburn, author and faculty member in English and philosophy at St. Peter's College, and John Thompson, president of St. Thomas More College and former St. Peter's sociology instructor, addressed these concerns. Their remarks opened up a lively discussion which quickly revealed the interest in and excitement about the college's future.

Dr. David Atkinson, dean of the college of arts and science at the University of Saskatchewan, spoke of the "terrifying vacuum" and "desperate search" of students today to which St.

Peter's offers an alternative to the larger university, with its smaller numbers and its emphasis on teaching. He also stressed the need for St. Peter's to be seen as part of the University of Saskatchewan, to be better known on campus. He asked whether St. Peter's could "afford growth."

Participants voiced a number of issues: desire for more contact with Benedictines and their spirituality; concern about students' search for meaning today; teaching students to think; a need for second-year students for greater continuity in the student body; need for student orientation; emphasis on the fine arts; using technology where appropriate; need for some permanent faculty members; concern to retain the informality; importance of hospitality.

From the conversations of Friday evening which stretched into the early hours of Saturday morning, it was already clear that the meeting had tapped a ground swell of hopes and concerns centring on St. Peter's College, the abbey and Benedictine spirituality.

Saturday morning began with five small groups taking up the three questions from Friday evening. The extent of shared themes emerged quickly as the five recorders spoke about what had been discussed in their small groups. Among the common themes were elaborations of the concerns raised the previous evening.

After lunch the five small groups drafted recommendations, which were reported to the plenary session. Sister Miriam Spenrath, OSU, and Father James Gray, OSB, provided concluding observations on the process begun.

Sr. Miriam spoke of the four areas of party (social), service (care for others), worship (chaplaincy) and space (be at home) as expressing concern for students and for building community at St. Peter's College which includes contact with the monks.

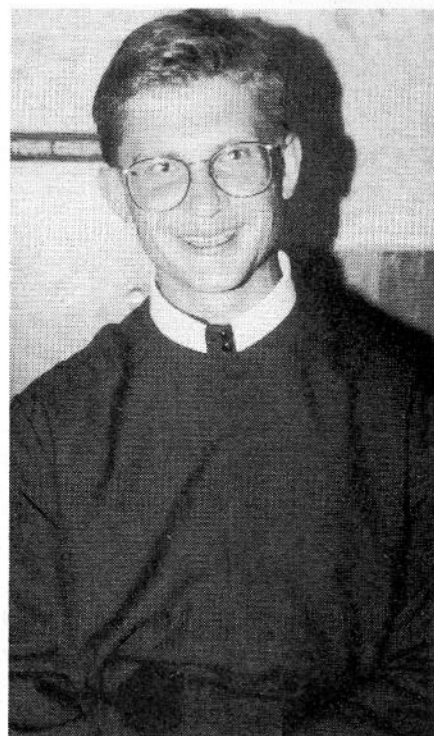
Father James offered the advice of 2 Timothy that we "think hard about all these things and understanding will come." He reminded participants that the meeting had fittingly been held on

the eve of Pentecost.

Father Andrew thanked the participants and spoke of the importance of the liberal arts as the tradition of the college and the church, and the need to avoid being "trendy" in offerings. He expressed pleasure that so many valued the college, a message which the Benedictine community needed to hear, and that faculty, students and staff were seeking ways in which the Benedictine community and the college could engage in conversation.

The overwhelming "yes" which Father Andrew received in asking whether those who had come would be willing to meet again showed not only the success of the symposium but the strong support for and affirmation of St. Peter's College within the abbacy and beyond.

(A college faculty meeting has been scheduled for Sept. 25 and 26, 1992 — a follow-up to the symposium. - Ed)



Brother Gregory Kevin Hrynkiw, OSBM (Order of St. Basil the Great), a friend of the guestmaster, paid a short visit to the abbey during his summer vacation. Br. Gregory is studying philosophy in Rome and was on a home visit this year. He made his novitiate in Mundare, Alta.

Meditation in the Benedictine tradition

St. Peter's Abbey will sponsor a two-day meditation retreat, Feb. 12 - 14, 1993. Paul Harris, a former director of the London, England, Christian Meditation Centre, will direct the retreat and meditation practice sessions. The retreat, which is open to laypeople and religious of all denominations, will begin Friday evening at 8 and end with Sunday lunch Feb. 14.

In a world increasingly aware of the need for silence and stillness, the way of Christian meditation speaks to us with the authority of a path that is rooted in both Christian tradition and authentic experience. This ancient form of Christian prayer is rooted in the

Scriptures, was taught by John Cassian and the Desert Fathers, and flows through the 14th century English spiritual classic, *The Cloud of Unknowing*.

It is a path beyond thought and imagination into the presence of the risen Lord who dwells in our hearts. The way is one of simplicity and discipline. This retreat will follow the form as taught by Fr. John Main (1926-1982), a Benedictine monk who rediscovered this ancient form of prayer.

Suggested donation for the Christian Meditation Retreat is:

Live-in\$90.00 Room and Board
Commuters.....\$50.00 includes two noon meals.

For further information contact the guestmaster, Br. Gerald, at 682-2581.

Please join the monks and laypeople on the Feb. 12 - 14 weekend, 1993, to meditate in the true monastic style — the prayer tradition of John Cassian.



Staff member Rod Scansen of Saskatoon and Prince Albert spent the entire summer, between rain showers, painting window frames on Severin Hall. Thanks Rod; we think of you every time we look out the window, and whenever it rains.



Visitors to the abbey this summer were Br. Jude and Fr. Meinrad of Ascension Priory, at Jerome, Idaho. Ascension Priory is a foundation of Mt. Angel Abbey where Br. Demetrius (right) is in his first year theology.



Brother Augustine Mallek, OSB, at the St. Procopius Abbey church organ. Br. Augustine, a monk of St. Procopius, played host to Br. Gerald after the Benedictine Musicians meeting at St. Meinrad Archabbey in Indiana.

St. Peter's Abbey - Severin Hall Muenster, Sask. S0K 2Y0

Severin Hall gift certificates available

FOR ANNIVERSARIES, BIRTHDAYS, ANY OCCASION,

give a weekend of peace and quiet, R. and R. in the Abbey Guestwing, Severin Hall.

Only \$35.00 per day.

\$40.00 for two - includes Room and Board.

Details from the Guestmaster - phone 682-2581

ST. PETER'S ABBEY NEWSLETTER

Published by the Benedictine community of St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Saskatchewan, S0K 2Y0.

Editor: Gerald Moran, OSB. Regular contributors: Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB; Albert Ruetz, OSB; Bernard Lange, OSB; Tony Saretsky. Photo credits: Moran, Yaskowich.

Logo designed by Kurt Van Kuren, OSB.

Abbot Peter's report

Everyone likes to be greeted with a smile. Monks at the abbey, and elsewhere, have plenty of opportunities to greet people.

The guestmaster's September calendar ended with this notation: "We had a record number of guests this summer: 216 in July (three groups) and 78 individuals in August."

This statistic reminds us that the guest department is an important apostolate at St. Peter's. Benedictine monks have a reputation for hospitality. It is not just the guestmaster who is hospitable. All of us are. This is not just an individual person's apostolate. It is a community apostolate. It is the community's spirit that strikes people. It is the community's prayer that draws them to a deeper nourishment of the Spirit.

The number and different types of guests or visitors who cross our doorway is just amazing. I remember one afternoon sitting at the coffee table. Around the table were a visitor from Japan, a visitor from Germany, plus a number of visitors from "just" Saskatchewan.

Pastors, too, have many opportunities to offer hospitality. Greeting people at the beginning of mass, smiling during mass and visiting parishioners in their home or welcoming guests to the rectory — all these are much appreciated and cherished.

The spirit of hospitality is a good attitude to remember as we begin a new college year. We have a record number of students. For most students, university is a new experience. St. Peter's has made a reputation as the "school with a home spirit" and that means students and visitors expect to find a welcoming attitude in everyone they meet.

Our presence to guests does also have an impact on them. Just recently I received a letter from a guest who visited here about seven years ago. It had made a lasting impact on him.

Having visitors come to a monastery is nothing new. It happened in St. Benedict's time too. In fact, he penned the famous line: "All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me'" (RB 53).

There are biblical stories that remind us that hospitality is an important virtue. But it is more. Our meeting with strangers is an opportunity to meet God.

The patriarch Abraham showed hospitality to three strangers. He gave them food, drink and shelter. These strangers, in return, revealed themselves as messengers of God.

The story of the sisters Martha and Mary teaches us about the rewards for those who offer hospitality. The two sisters and their brother Lazarus, were hosts to the Lord. The two disciples travelling to Emmaus invited a stranger who joined them on the road to stay with them for the night. It was while they "broke bread" that this stranger revealed himself as the risen Lord.

Hospitality to strangers, hospitality to friends, hospitality to new ideas — all are challenges. All are different opportunities to meet the Lord.



St. Peter's Abbey Severin Hall Retreat Centre Muenster, Sask., S0K 2Y0 (306) 682-2581; (FAX) 682-4402

For spiritual growth and enrichment in the peace and quiet of a monastery, try Severin Hall guest-wing at St. Peter's Abbey.

St. Peter's monastery has wooded areas with meditation trails, orchard and gardens among tall evergreens planted by the monks.

Spiritual direction available to men and women upon request. All guests are encouraged to pray with the monks in their church; to rest, to listen in quiet solitude, and to share their concerns for healing, peace of mind and reconciliation, to return to their God.

Reasonable rates for religious groups; others pay by donation. Working with the monks is an option for those short on funds.

Phone the guest master at 682-2581 for reservations.