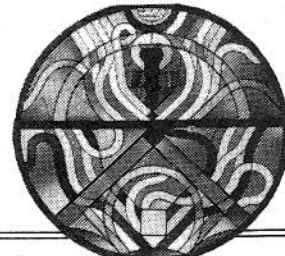




St. Peter's Abbey Newsletter

Vol. 16 No. 1 1993 Winter 1994



Sylvester Vredegoor, OSB †1937-1992†

Fr. Sylvester was born in Holland May 19, 1937, and was baptized Antony Mary Martin. He came to Canada with his parents in 1952 and immediately enrolled at St. Peter's College, Muenster, to complete his high-school education.

He entered the Benedictine community of St. Peter's Abbey as a novice in 1957 and, after completing his seminary studies at St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn., he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Francis Klein of Saskatoon June 6, 1964.

When Abbot Jerome Weber asked for volunteers to answer the call for priests in the province of Alagoas, Brazil, Fr. Sylvester was one of the first to respond. Since then, 1967, until the time of his death, he remained on the abbacy mission team.

Throughout these years he combined his spiritual ministry with the temporal. Among other projects was that of assisting in establishing a community farm.

When he returned on leave in 1983 he was accompanied by one of his parishioners who came to thank the people of St. Peter's Abbey for their support of the missionary team and for the contributions which have made possible the construction or repair of six churches and the launching of many community projects within the immense and predominantly poor parish.

Fr. Sylvester was killed in a motorcycle accident in Brazil, Saturday, Nov. 21, 1992. He was on his way to celebrate mass for a small community near his parish in Marechal Deodoro in the province of Alagoas in northeastern Brazil. He was hit from behind by a semi-trailer and killed instantly. He was riding his motorcycle because his truck had a flat tire.

A memorial mass for Fr. Sylvester



Fr. Sylvester meeting Pope John Paul II in 1988.

was celebrated at Sts. Peter and Paul Abbey Church, Muenster, at the same time a similar service was held in Brazil, on Friday, Nov. 27, at 2 pm.

He is survived by six sisters and six brothers, all residing in Alberta except Sr. Helena of Brazil and Everett who lives at MacDowall, Sask.

Fr. Syl shares his life

The Ursulines of Bruno, serving in the Abbacy's Brazil mission, have supplied a good amount of material in honor of Fr. Sylvester and his life of service to the poor and needy. The editors wish to thank Sisters Claire Novecosky, Maria Doepker, and Louise Hinz for their input. Unfortunately, space will not allow us to print everything received.

However, Sr. Claire discovered in Fr. Sylvester's office desk the following 'last legacy' which we wish to share with our readers.

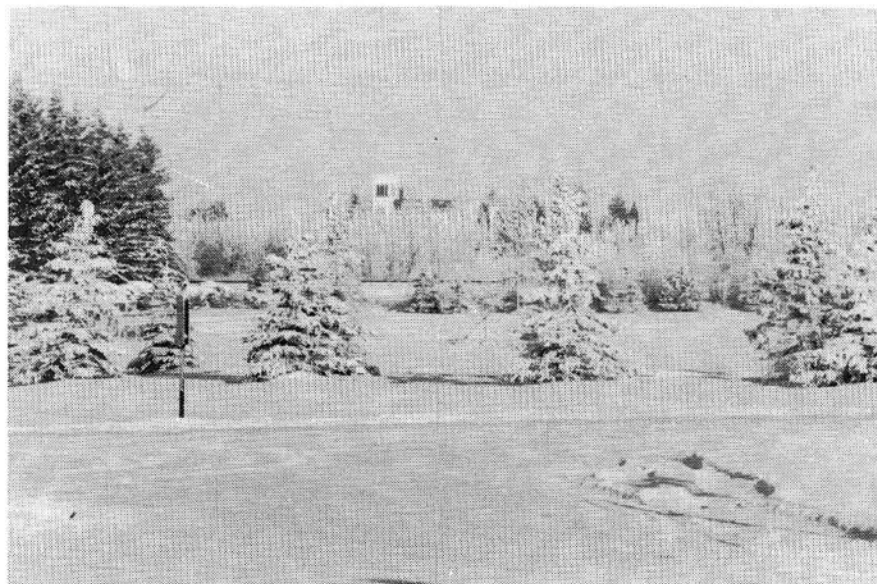
By Sylvester Vredegoor, OSB

I give you my eyes that you may see colors, the oceans and the mountains.
I give you my ears that you may listen to the wise, the nightingales and the hummingbirds.
I give you my hands that you may plant wheat, gather flowers and fruit.
I give you my mind that you may think, feel, meditate and invent.
I give you my heart, if necessary, that you may love.
I give you all my senses: eyes, hands, mind, heart and ears, that they may live for me after I go to sleep.

Elderhostel coming to St. Peter's

Elderhostel is an educational adventure for adults 60 years and over. It is inexpensive and offers short-term educational experiences. Elderhostel is a non-profit, educational organization offering short-term academic programs. Courses

being offered at St. Peter's from May 29 - June 11, 1994 are: Monastic History; Saskatchewan History; and German Folklore & Culture. For more information contact the local co-ordinator: Leo Weber at 682-4578.



St. Peter's Cathedral after the Sept. 12 pre-season snowfall, taken from the Abbey.

NEW ABBEY PHONE NUMBERS:

Abbey Switchboard	682-1777
Abbot's Office	682-1788
Business Office	682-1765
Guestmaster	682-1775
Farm Manager	682-1768
Kitchen Manager	682-1762
St. Peter's Press	682-1770
Prairie Messenger	682-1772
St. Peter's College	682-1755
Abbey Fax	682-1766

All monks have their own phone number — available on request.

If there is no answer at any of the abbey numbers, the call will automatically go to the main switchboard to be answered by the person on duty in the Porter's Office.

Deaths

Other deaths which have occurred since the last SPANewsletter are:

Sr. Colette Kloppenberg, OSE, Humboldt - Dec. 6, 1992

Elizabeth Novecosky, Humboldt, Dec. 9, 1992 - Mother of Abbot Peter

Irene Medernach, Cudworth, Jan. 25, 1993 - Oblate

AnnaMarie DeMong, Middle Lake, Jan. 30, 1993 - Mother of Fr. Lawrence

Helen Koob, Cudworth, Feb. 21, 1993 - Oblate

Sr. Bernard Mueller, OSU, of Bruno - April 17, 1993

Sr. Isabella Zoller, OSE, of Humboldt - May 20, 1993

Anthony Nguyen, Saskatoon - May 30, 1993 - Brother of Br. Anthony

Mary Thiem, Germany - July 9, 1993 - Mother of Br. Wolfgang

Martha Bergermann, Humboldt, Nov. 10, 1993 - Oblate

WANTED

for new Guest Meeting Room: Pool Table and Grand or Upright Piano in good condition.

**Guestmaster
682-1775**

Benedictine Oblates

Enrolled as Oblate Candidates were:

Rev. Don Bolen - Regina, Sask. - Nov. 23, 1992

Daniel Cahill - St. John's, Nfld. - March 2, 1993

Chronicles

1992

Oct. 29 — Sixty members of the National Council of Priests meeting in Saskatoon visited the abbey and joined the monks for Vespers and supper. Bishop Peter Mallon of Nelson, B.C., accompanied the priests.

Nov. 21 — Sr. Claire Novacosky, OSU, phoned at Vespers time to relate the tragic news of Fr. Sylvester Vredegoor's death in a motorcycle-truck collision. (See main feature.)

Nov. 27 — Abbot Peter attended the memorial service in Brazil for Fr. Sylvester. At the same time another memorial service was held in Sts. Peter & Paul Abbey Church which relatives of Fr. Sylvester attended.

**We can give without loving, but we cannot love without giving.*

Dec. 9 — Abbot Peter's mother, Elizabeth Novacosky of Humboldt,



Farewell dinner for Fr. Sylvester at the end of his last visit to St. Peter's; Fr. Lawrence and his mother with back to the camera; Fr. Andrew, Fr. Sylvester and his sister Lena.

died just five months after her husband, Martin, passed away (May 25/92).

1993

Jan. 27 — Monks of the Abbey met for the second time to discern our apos-

tolate in Brazil.

Feb. 12 — We sponsored a retreat on Christian Meditation, animated by Paul Harris of Ottawa, a disciple of John Main, OSB

**To handle yourself, use your head; to handle others, use your heart.*

March 18 — Discerning meeting #3 on Brazil. Decision was reached: not to replace Fr. Sylvester unless we established a monastic foundation. While the decision to start a monastic foundation did not pass, Fr. Bernard Stauber will remain in the Brazil mission, as the Ursuline Sisters are also doing.

March 20 — Oblate Day, at which new members were received (cf photo).

April 30 — The Elderhostel Program is set in motion. This is a week-long program of instruction, sightseeing, and socializing for those 60 and over. It is scheduled for May and June of 1994 and is being co-ordinated by Leo Weber of Muenster.

**A friend is one who comes to you when all others leave.*

May 11 — Abbot Conrad Rausch, OSB, St. Martin's Abbey, Lacey, Wash., visited for several days. He was Fr. Harvey Wingfield's abbot. Fr. Harvey is presently in charge of Englefeld and St. Gregor parishes.



Organ workshop conducted by Dr. Betty-Louise Lumby of Alabama.



New college co-presidents honored in newly renovated monks' dining room. Triptych painting by Sr. Christine Loehndorf.

May 2 - 8 — Monks' retreat directed by Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI, Oblate Provincial of St. Mary's Province (Sask.). Fr. Martin Brodner, golden jubilarian, celebrated one of the retreat masses.

May 30 — Br. Anthony Nguyen's brother (also named Anthony), died today. He suffered from a heart condition.

**Some people give and forgive; others get and forget.*

June 4 - 5 — First College Symposium. Decision was made to change the governing of the college: to reach out beyond the abbey, and to advertise for a college president to replace our retiring director, Tony Saretsky.

June 6 — Br. Gerald visited



Memorial service in Abbey cemetery for Fr. Sylvester; some personal effects were buried.

Assumption Abbey at Richardton, N.D., where he was privileged to take

part in one of the Abbey's centennial celebrations. On the way down to Richardton he visited with Fr. Don Bolen in Estevan, and with Br. Stanley in Regina on the return trip. The spirit of hospitality at Assumption Abbey was outstanding.

June 14 - 17 — About 25 clergy of the Ukrainian Eparchy of Saskatchewan were on retreat.

June 26 — Oblate Day (see photo).

June 29 — The Abbey community voted to instal a modern computerized telephone and intercom system.

**Any person who is always feeling sorry for himself should be.*



Fr. Martin, sitting with his brother Gregory, honored on his 50th priesthood anniversary.



Oblate candidates above are: Anne Schweighardt, Muenster; Robert and Pauline Langen, Humboldt; Richard and Olga Reineke, Carmel. Photo taken June 26, 1993.

July 3 — The Sask. Writers Guild began their two-month "Summer Colony" in St. Scholastica Residence. The former convent was recently remodelled for increased bathroom facilities, and is used as an overflow residence for guests.

July 4 — The first of two week-long Choir Camps sponsored by the Saskatchewan Choral Federation began. There were about 150 children registered for the two camps.

**If I keep a green bough in my heart, the singing bird will come.*

July 10 — The final stained-glass window made and installed by Fr. Alfred Engele is known as the "Damian Window." The community would like to

thank all the parishioners and friends of Fr. Damian for their generous donations toward the window put up in his honor and memory. Fr. Damian Yaskowich, who was killed in a car accident on May 11, 1989, was the abbey art expert and a member of the Abbey Church Building Committee.

July 18 — Mt. Carmel Sunday. The same afternoon we had a memorial service in the abbey cemetery for Fr. Sylvester. We interred personal effects worn at the time of his accidental death last Nov. 21. Many of Fr. Sylvester's relatives from Alberta attended and were guests of the community for supper.

July 24 — A farewell gathering for Jan Bron (Br. Novice Hendrick). He moved to Winnipeg to be close to his daughter who attends the University of Manitoba.



Ken Wood, Oblate of St. Benedict, from Saskatoon.

July 26 — Tri-Community Day at St. Elizabeth Convent grounds. The Ursulines, Elizabethans and Benedictines joined in their yearly social event



Christmas creche by Dorothy Doecker of Watson, for Sts. Peter & Paul Abbey Church.



On June 26, 1993, final oblations were made by: Margaret Hofmann, Muenster; Phyllis Ann Thompson, Saskatoon; and Rose Marie Fowler, St. Albert, Alta.

of games, skits and food. On the same day work began on the installation of the new abbey phone system.

**May you live all the days of your life.*

Aug. 1 — Pastoral appointments effective; Fr. Martin Brodner, priest-jubilarian, returned to the abbey; Fr. Leo Hinz became pastor of St. Bruno in Bruno after a one-year assignment at the Regina Matrimonial Tribunal.

Aug. 1 - 3 — CRC-West sponsored a workshop at Queen's House, Saskatoon, for religious professed 10 years or less. Of the 40 attending, nine including Abbot Peter were from St. Peter's Abbey.

Aug. 10 — Br. Wolfgang Thiem flew to Germany for his mother's funeral. She was almost 100 years when she died yesterday.

**All people smile in the same language.*

Aug. 19 — Abbacy Organ Workshop conducted by Dr. Betty-Louise Lumby of the University of Montevallo, Ala. Dr. Lumby, who is a Benedictine Oblate, gave a public organ recital at Christ Church Anglican in Saskatoon on Sunday, Aug. 22.

Aug. 21 — Br. Demetrius Wasylyniuk returned to Mt. Angel Abbey, Ore., for second-year theology.

Aug. 25 — Forty Oblates of Mary Immaculate (St. Mary's Province) toured the abbey and surroundings, and joined the monks at Noonday Praise and Lunch. Truly a friendly and happy group.

**Children are a great comfort in your old age — and they help you reach it faster, too.*

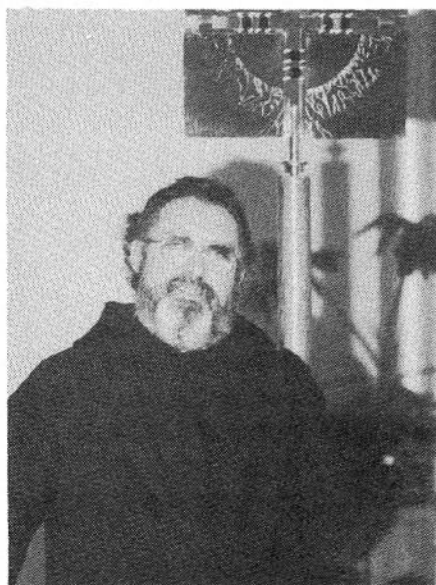


Choir Camp staff sponsored by the Saskatchewan Choral Federation.

Aug. 30 — Br. Bernard Lange was admitted to the Royal University Hospital for double by-pass heart surgery. It was his second one and was more successful than the first.

Aug. 31 — Abbot Peter and Frs. Philip Loehr and Alfred Engele left for an "auto" Western European tour. For Frs. Philip and Alfred it was a golden jubilee of priesthood journey. Abbot Peter stayed behind in Rome for the Western Canada Bishops' 'Ad Limina' visit (Sept 11-18).

Sept. 7 — College Registration Day, which brought the second largest enrolment (over 200) in our history. It was surpassed last year. One reason for the excellent enrolment is the two-year university courses which have been offered for the past few years.



Old news, new subprior. Br. Thomas Ward, with Abbey church processional cross.

Sept. 7 — Greg Saretsky, a former college student and youngest son of Tony Saretsky, began employment as switch-board operator and evening librarian.

**All sunshine makes a desert.*

Sept. 8 — Nativity of the B.V.M. Fr. Don Bolen celebrated the abbey community eucharist for the first time since his ordination two years ago. He is staying in a hermitage completing a thesis on Karl Rahner for his Masters Degree in Theology.



Final Oblations above are: Clara Dust, Humboldt; and Mary Zimmerman, Muenster. Made on March 20, 1993.

Sept. 11 - 12 — A most extraordinary phenomenon of nature was witnessed here: a brilliant thunderstorm on Saturday evening and balmy 20° C, followed by six inches of snow by Sunday morning! Please note, Fr. Dennis!

**The secret of happy living is not to do what you like but to like what you do.*

Sept. 25 — Br. Bernard reported the grain harvest completed after many delays due to rain.

Sept. 27 — Br. Wolfgang began major renovations in the former convent, St. Scholastica Residence. This will make eight rooms suitable for both sleeping and working; only two sleeping rooms remain the original small size.

Oct. 6 — Community said farewell to Tony Saretsky, past college director, and to Mrs. Margaret Haeusler of the college maintenance staff, with a banquet and presentations.

Oct. 15 — Fr. Bernard Stauber returned to Brazil where he will continue his work with the Saskatoon Mission Team.

**No one ever injured his eyesight by looking on the bright side of things.*

Oct. 18 — We received our first CD player through the generosity of an Abbey benefactor, Mr. Luc Sinnema of Calgary, Alta. Luc also donated several classical and chant discs.

Oct. 24 — First student-parent-staff eucharist for the current school year, celebrated by Abbot Peter Novecosky.



Everett Vredegoor (right) and family from MacDowall, Sask.

Nov. 1 — Br. Wolfgang began renovation of lower level (former library) of Severin Hall. It will become a meeting and recreation area for guests and monks.

**The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts.*

Nov. 10 — Community meeting to discuss the Bell Tower location: no consensus. Special supper and social for Fr. Martin, honoring his 50th anniversary of priesthood. The actual anniversary date is Sunday, Nov. 14.



Sr. Bernadine Fetter will re-open the Abbey Family Enrichment Services on her return from Brazil early in January '94.



Jan Bron with Fr. Richard Meidl, Novice Director.

Nov. 18 — Oblate Ken Wood of Saskatoon began helping Br. Randy paint the former convent, St. Scholastica Residence.

**Fear God and all other fears will disappear.*

Nov. 20 — Last Oblate Day of 1993. Dates for 1994 Oblate Days are: March 18-20 which will be a weekend retreat; June 25; and Nov. 19, 1994. Please mark the calendar.

Nov. 26 — Community discussion re items raised by the Liturgy Committee.

Nov. 27 — Began using the N.R.S.V. Bible at Vigils for the first

Sunday of Advent, and the weekday NRSV Lectionary on Monday. Also ready for use is a new inclusive language version of the Grail translation of the Psalms for Vigils and Noon Praise.

Under separate cover you should also be receiving the current St. Peter's College Alumni Newsletter, which brings College highlights.

Nov. 27 — Last day of the Liturgical Year is the "cut-off" date for this issue of SPAN — (St. Peter's Abbey Newsletter).

**That person is richest whose pleasures are the cheapest.*



David Tompkins of Toronto (lower right) with the Sask. Writers Guild summer camp.

New lay-staff hired during the past year were: Louise Pokolm and Ken Janzen for the College; Jennifer Siermachesky for the kitchen; and Allan Vedress for the entire complex. Allan has already left evidence of his many talents all over the Abbey and College campus.

WELCOME TO ST. PETER'S!

May God bless all of you this Christmas

By Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB

There are many reasons to write the friends of St. Peter's Abbey in this newsletter. First, I can thank Br. Gerald and Fr. Martin for "resurrecting" the newsletter after more than a year's absence.

Collecting the stories for a newsletter is another job, on top of others; so I'm grateful for their collaboration, to make the load lighter.

Second, this newsletter will let you know that, while you haven't heard from us for some time, we aren't dead or inactive! A lot of things have been happening at the abbey over the past year. You will catch a glimpse of some of the events as you read through the chronicle in these pages.

One of the bigger events has to do with the college program. Last year we had one of our biggest enrolments ever, with 225 university students, 25 office education students, and another 25 pre-vocation students using St. Michael's Hall on a daily basis. That's about 275 students, not counting the staff and teachers.

This year's college enrolment did not go up to 250 as expected; it decreased to 185. That was the trend around the province. However, St. Peter's has hired new college co-presidents and is restructuring its governance. We are involving more people from the surrounding community in running our college program.

A third reason to be grateful for this



Abbot Peter with Pope John Paul II, September 1993.

newsletter at this time is that it gives me an opportunity to wish all of you God's choicest blessings. While it is Santa Claus, Christmas carols and the ring of cash registers in shopping malls that we hear most often, we know deep down that the birth of Jesus Christ is the real reason for celebrating.

Jesus's birth is an historic sign of the undeniable fact that God is a God of love. God could have given up on his people. God had made a covenant with his people long ago; repeatedly the people sinned and turned their backs on God. God never turned his

back on us. This is something we need to remember over and over again in our own day and age. God does not give up on us, even when we give up on ourselves.

Christmas is not only a time to remember the birth of Jesus. It is also a time to celebrate our numerous rebirths — the many times we were given new hope and new courage to keep on journeying.

May God's love always be firm and constant in your heart. May it be the beacon that guides you. May it be the main gift you give to one another this Christmas.

ST. PETER'S ABBEY NEWSLETTER

Published by the Benedictine community of St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Saskatchewan S0K 2Y0, twice per year, December and June.

Editor: Gerald Moran, OSB.

Regular contributors: Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB; Albert Ruetz, OSB; Bernard Lange, OSB; Martin Brodner, OSB.

Photo credits: Moran, the Vatican.

Logo by Kurt Van Kuren, OSB.

In your last will and testament please remember St. Peter's Abbey. Our legal title is:

*ORDER OF ST. BENEDICT
Muenster, Sask. S0K 2Y0*