

St. Peter's Abbey Newsletter

Vol. 19 No. 1 Winter 1997

The front cover of the first newsletter

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March, 1976

ST. PETER'S ABBEY NEWSLETTER



Fr. Wilfred Hergott cleaning snow off the sidewalks.

Abbot Peter reviews highlights of 1996

Dear friends,

With this issue of the Abbey Newsletter Br. Thomas takes on the role of editor. I want to thank Br. Gerald for his good service in this position for the past years. We continue to look forward to the valuable collection of pictures he takes to record some of the events at the abbey.

There are other things to be thankful for since our last newsletter. Br. Neil made his temporary vows and Fr. Demetrius was ordained to the priesthood. In addition two men joined us in the fall of 1996 as candidates. One of them decided this was not his vocation and one candidate remains.

A highlight of 1996 was the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Muenster Diocese. A book was published for the occasion and most of the 1,000 copies are already sold. It updates Fifty Golden Years, printed in 1953. Much has happened in the last 40 years in the church and in this area. A diocesan celebration was held on the abbey grounds on June 17 and we were blessed with ideal weather.

St. Peter's College also celebrated its 75th anniversary and held a reunion to celebrate the occasion. It was good to renew acquaintances with former students. Some of their professors, of course, are no longer with us as they



Participants at the 1996 Abbot's Congress in Rome. The new abbot primate is Marcel Rooney, centre front. The three Canadian abbots are to his right, third row from the front.

have gone to their reward. One of our monks who died in 1996 was Br. Conrad Abs. He was a good and faithful worker at the Prairie Messenger for a half century.

The fall of 1996 was the occasion for an abbots congress in Rome. This meeting takes place every four years. There were about 250 abbots and priors present for the 10-day meeting at the end of September. We elected Marcel Rooney as the new abbot primate and reports were given on Benedictine initiatives in China and Third World countries as well as on developments at our international college, Sant' Anselmo, in Rome.

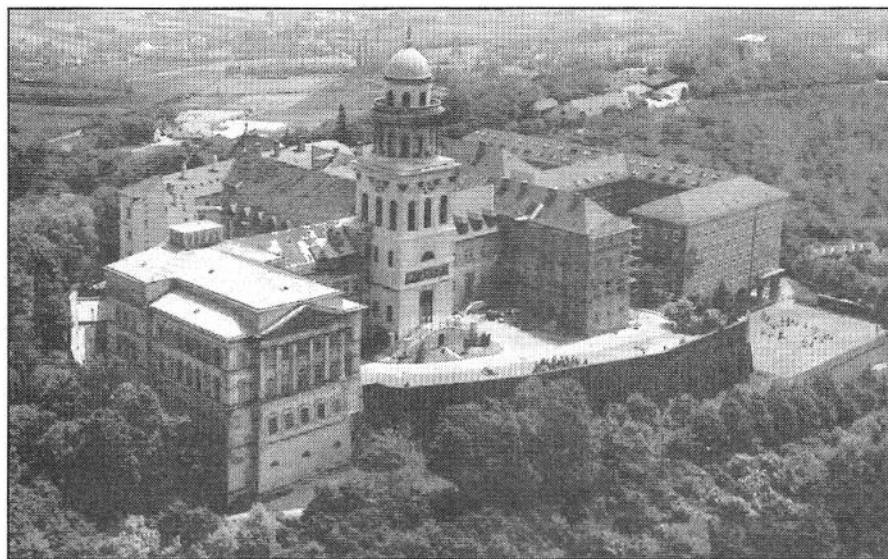
After the meeting I and 20 other abbots went to the Hungarian Abbey of

Pannonhalmo which was celebrating its 1,000th anniversary. It was indeed an interesting visit. We heard stories of how the abbey was spared by the armies in WW II and how the monks were restricted during the communist regime. Yet, their residential school has 350 boys in high school, with a lineup waiting to get in. A day's tour of the countryside reminded me of what Saskatchewan agriculture looked like in the 1950s.

This year, 1997, marks the 30th anniversary of our mission to Brazil. In February I plan to visit Fr. Bernard as well as the Ursuline team, Sisters Maria, Claire, Louise and Ana Lucia. We are grateful to the many benefactors and members of our diocese who continue to support our diocesan team through their prayers and donations. Pope John Paul II has been urging Catholics to be mission-minded, especially as we approach the third millennium.

And this is a good point to end with — a reminder that we are beginning the three-year countdown to the celebration of Jubilee Year 2000. Pope John Paul II has been giving us many challenges: to be reconciled with one another, to work for Christian unity, to be joyful, to work for justice and peace, and to dwell within the heart of God.

As followers of St. Benedict, none of this is foreign to us. May we be up to taking on this challenge every day of our lives.



Abbey of Pannonhalmo

Wasylyniuk ordained to priesthood

By Andrew M. Britz, OSB

MUENSTER, Sask. — Others might see it as a circuitous route, but Rev. Demetrius Wasylyniuk, OSB, sees his ordination to the priesthood as a logical step from one ministry to another.

Wasylyniuk, a monk of St. Peter's Abbey, was ordained priest on June 29, the patronal feastday of the monastery, by Bishop Blaise Morand of Prince Albert.

When asked why he became a priest, the newly ordained monk answers quickly: "I feel called to serve the community. I saw being a funeral director (his previous occupation) as a ministry and I see the priesthood as a ministry."

Demetrius, the son of Elsa and the late Joseph Wasylyniuk of Watrous, Sask., began his work with Scarf's Funeral Home in Humboldt. There he came to know three priest-monks very well, namely, Fathers Florian Renneberg, Maurice Weber and Martin Brodner.

"I stayed in contact with Maurice and with his guidance I came to Muenster to continue my education and eventually to enter the monastic life," he said.

In recommending Wasylyniuk to the bishop during the ordination rite held at St. Peter's Cathedral, Abbot Peter



Bishop Blaise Morand, Abbot Peter Novecosky, Elsa Wasylyniuk, Fr. Demetrius Wasylyniuk and Alex Wasylyniuk.

Novecosky reviewed his eight years in the monastery and highlighted his service to the elderly and to the sick.

The abbot noted that during his diaconal year he ministered in a special way to the terminally ill. He also noted that Wasylyniuk can give an inspiring sermon which is true to the Scriptures.

In beginning his exhortation to the candidate to the priesthood, Morand noted that 15 years ago, on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, he was ordained bishop.

"What better way can I mark this anniversary," he asked the people gathered to celebrate as diocese and as friends, "than by sharing the priesthood of Jesus Christ?"

At the evening banquet held at the abbey, Rev. Pascal Cheline, OSB, a professor from Mt. Angel Seminary in Oregon, spoke of Demetrius's six years spent with the monks of their monastery. "As a superior of Mt. Angel," he concluded, "I make you an honorary member of our community."

Rev. James Gray, OSB, the guest speaker at the banquet, noted Demetrius's natural curiosity and how he was transforming that into a blessing for the abbey. "He is interested in everything, in everybody," Gray noted.

Then, testing the new priest's knowledge of Latin, Gray encouraged him to make an old Latin adage his motto for priestly service. "Salus populi suprema lex esto," he said, "The salva-

tion of the people is to be the supreme law."

Gray, now a hermit at the abbey, praised his confrere for including the text from Galatians on his program: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female: for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

He combined this text with the text taken from the vigil office of Sts. Peter and Paul, in which Paul proclaims that God's grace is most powerful when we acknowledge our weakness (see 1 Corinthians 12).

"A consciousness of the unity of God's people combined with a consciousness of our own weakness makes for a powerful priestly ministry," Gray said.

In concluding his remarks, Gray quoted "one of his favorite texts" and used it as a blessing for the new priest whom he praised for overcoming serious physical handicaps: "Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their youth, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Is 40:31).

In his short address closing the evening celebration, Wasylyniuk thanked all present, especially his mother, the monastic community and his many friends. "You are the reason I am 'Father Demetrius,'" he said, "You all share in my priesthood."



Elsa Wasylyniuk with her son Fr. Demetrius.

College reunion a resounding success

By Phyllis Thompson

The long weekend in August '96 was a very special one for St. Peter's College: not only was it the scheduled date for the usual "every five years" alumni/ae reunion, but it was the central date on which the college celebrated its 75th anniversary.

Alumni/ae came from all over Canada; some travelled from California, Florida and other parts of the U.S.

Over 400 grads and special invited guests gathered in varying numbers, depending on what events each attended.

Most of the monastic community was able to be at some or all of the events; understandably, liturgical obligations of various monk-pastors affected their attendance.

Plenty of reminiscing occurred when the alumni/ae and the monks got together; and the monks who couldn't be at one event or another were truly missed.

One of the monks who was honored was Fr. Francis Lohmer, current pastor of St. Scholastica Parish in Burr. Fr. Francis was on the staff when the college opened in 1921.

Fr. Francis, Lambert Lemmerich and Bernard Duerr — two students from the first class in 1921 — received special gifts. And Fr. Francis expressed his appreciation for the trio; he also told some delightful stories in the process.

Poignant and humorous stories were



Fr. Francis Lohmer and Bill Allen

told and heard all weekend, but Sunday was the day set aside for the three formal events: a special mass, a dinner, and a formal program.

The mass took place in Sts. Peter & Paul Abbey Church, a new building for many of the returning grads.

Abbot Peter Novecosky was the principal celebrant/homilist; he was joined by Bishop Raymond Roussin, SM, of the Gravelbourg Diocese and 15 other concelebrants, mostly Benedictines.

The dinner and formal program took place in the college's gym.

Notable guests were Saskatchewan's Lieutenant Governor, Jack Wiebe, and his wife, Bishop Roussin, MP Georgette Sheridan, MLA June Draude, the presidents of Campion College in Regina and St. Thomas More College in

Saskatoon, and a senior administrator from the University of Saskatchewan.

During the program, retired Abbot Jerome Weber helped unveil a plaque presented by the government; it acknowledges that Michael Hall (the large red brick building) is now a provincial heritage site.

There was a wonderful atmosphere on the abbey grounds at that weekend's celebration during which laughter, good cheer, and some tears were the group's response to the many shared memories.

Nov. 17, 1995 — College Awards Night & Symposium. There were 29 scholarships handed out to students of our college.



Reunion celebrants

Origins of Oblates at St. Peter's Abbey

The Benedictine monks founded a monastery in St. Peter's Colony on May 21, 1903. How did the Oblates begin at this abbey? By persons who, having heard of Benedictine Oblates, requested to become secular Oblates here.

The first recorded request came Feb. 2, 1945, from Stephen McEachern, of Regina, SK. Since the Oblates were well established at St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn., Abbot Severin wrote to Abbot Alcuin on Feb. 6, 1945, for Oblate informational material, medals, application forms, etc. Stephen made his final oblation June 13, 1946 — 50 years ago!

Ten years later Fr. Martin Brodner, OSB, conducted a workshop on The Mass Lived at Madonna House, Combermere, Ont., where several members were already Oblates for St. John's Abbey. With this Canadian Benedictine contact two members of that lay apostolate requested to be Oblates for our abbey. Marite Langlois and Rose Gagne made their final oblations in 1958 and 1959. Similar requests were made by Grant and Vivian Maxwell (1960) and Bob Zens (1962). Contact with these was kept alive by sending them the monthly Oblate Newsletter of St. John's Abbey.

Then came the breakthrough in our abbacy. In a letter (July 19, 1962) to St.



On Oblate Day, March 23, 1996, Marcel and Theresa Roy of Hoey, Sask., were enrolled as Oblate candidates at St. Peter's Abbey by Fr. Albert Ruetz, Oblate director.

John's Abbey, Oblate Director Fr. Martin wrote, "So far we had just accepted the few who actually asked and they were GEMS. Last July (1962) the pastor of Humboldt, Fr. Francis Lohmer, OSB, who had contacted prospective members, made it possible to invest a dozen, bringing our total to 18."

For the record, nine of these were from Humboldt: Mr. and Mrs. Ted Bergemann, Mr. and Mrs. John Krenn, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Konlup, Agnes Heiderken, Marie Schneider, Martha Bergemann, Rosa Gray (Muenster), Alphonse Gerwing, Rev. Gabriel Rodriguez (El Salvador — at seminary

in Mission, B.C.).

By 1966, 12 more had joined the Oblates. Since 1958 Fr. Martin had sent a local newsletter along with the regular monthly, The Oblate (St. John's), to each Oblate. Since a solid core of these were from Humboldt, quarterly Oblate meetings were held in its church basement. The core of these meetings, in turn, was studying the documents of Vatican II (1962-65).

The year after Vatican II (1966) marked the beginning of many changes and adaptations. For instance, Fr. Martin was sent as chaplain to St. Benedict's Monastery-Academy, Winnipeg. Fr. Norbert Schwinghammer replaced him and kept the Oblate ship afloat via the local newsletter and St. John's Oblate.

In 1980 the Oblates were placed in the care of Fr. Albert Ruetz, OSB. Between 1980 and 1983, 23 candidates made final oblation, and a total of 105 have done so from 1980 to the present. Twenty-eight in total have passed to their eternal reward.

Nov. 22, 1995 — Lay presiders' fall workshop under the direction of Fr. Leo Hinz, pastor of Bruno.

Nov. 22-Dec. 5, 1995 — Fr. Norbert was in hospital with pneumonia but has recovered wondrously.



Frank Poelking joins the Oblates and Norbert and Elvira Niebrugge made final oblation.

Despite short summer, crops prospered

By Bernard Lange, OSB

The year 1996 will be remembered in agriculture as the year without a real spring and only three weeks of summer — and, to top it off, a wet, cool fall.

The spring was very late. Seeding was started May 28, and on the 30th we had 1 1/2 inches of rain which slowed down seeding for three days. Even though seeding was late the crops developed very fast.

The corn and potatoes were planted the last day of May. The corn grew very well even though the weather was cool and wet. The potatoes had a very poor start, most of the plants did not appear above ground until the first week of July, but the crop turned out fair to average with good healthy potatoes.

The corn crop turned out very good with big cobs, sweet and tasty. We sold about 2,700 dozen cobs.

The garden also suffered from the cool spring, but caught up later and ended up with a good supply of extra cucumbers and beans along with a few tomatoes.

The grain crops matured about a week or two later than average, but the harvest was a long drawn-out affair. We started swathing in the first part of September and combining about two weeks later, but it was short lived as it started to rain.

Only some barley was harvested without rain, the rest had some rain but

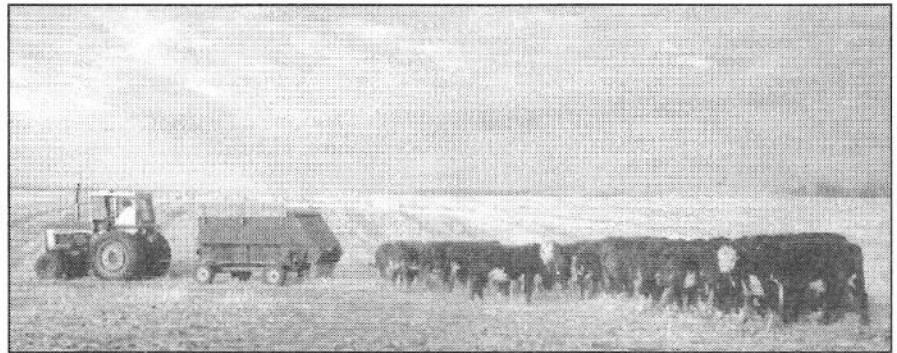
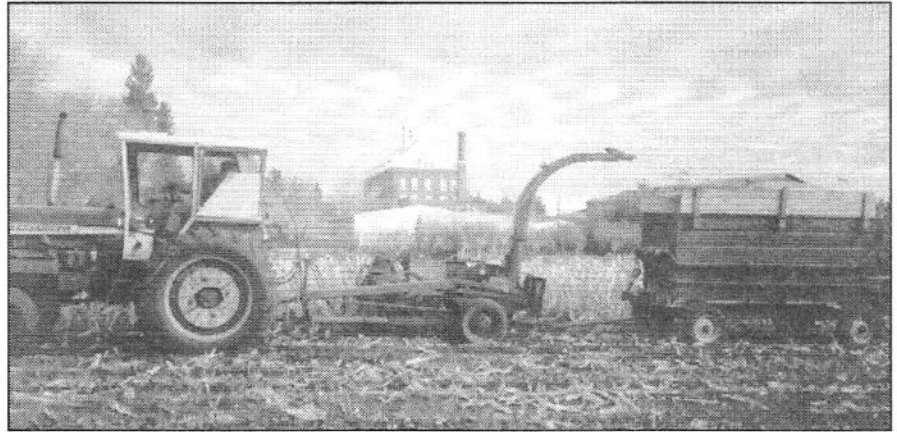


Photo shows "where the leftover corn goes in the Fall." It is cut and silaged into the wagon which hauls it to the waiting beef herd!

still accepted for malting.

Our canola had some problems with the Bertha Army Worm and required spraying; it possibly affected the yield somewhat as it was only average, but it was dry.

Harvesting the wheat was a slow process. We did not have any dry wheat

this year, but the yield was good. We finished combining just one day before our big snowfall that is still with us.

The oat crop was good, the quality was also good, it was harvested in a dry condition.

Over all the crops were good, but not exceptional.

Nov. 29, 1995 — A sign went up, "An organ has been born!" As of 1:15 p.m. our abbey pipe organ gave its first grunts into life. You should have seen the face of "mama" (Fr. William who set it up and announced it). The maple/ walnut organ console was set up in the abbey church and played for Vespers on Dec. 12. Now Fr. William begins the job of fine-tuning.

Nov. 30 — In the afternoon a community meeting was held to evaluate the future of our college.

In the evening Fr. Nestor Gregoire, OMI, editor of Our Family, was guest

speaker at the second in this year's series, Celebrating Christian Community. His topic: Making Worship Come Alive.

Dec. 12 — Main entrance reception desk was installed by our handyman, Allan Vedress.

Handrail brackets, made in our shop by Br. Bernard and Harold Dyck, were installed in the basement corridors leading from church to abbey dining room. The wooden rails were made by Allan Vedress.

Dec. 18 — Br. Michael attended a

voice-training workshop in Winona, Minn., animated by Walter Bahn, who also had a chant workshop before that at the abbey with the monks.

Dec. 15 — Br. Demetrius, studying fourth-year theology at Mt. Angel Seminary, Ore., returned home for the Christmas break.

Dec. 28 — Special monastic chapter to study a projected fund-raising drive for our college.

Dec. 29 — Our Jubilee Calendar-1996 was ready for sale.

Cybermonks connect with the Internet

By Kurt Van Kuren, OSB

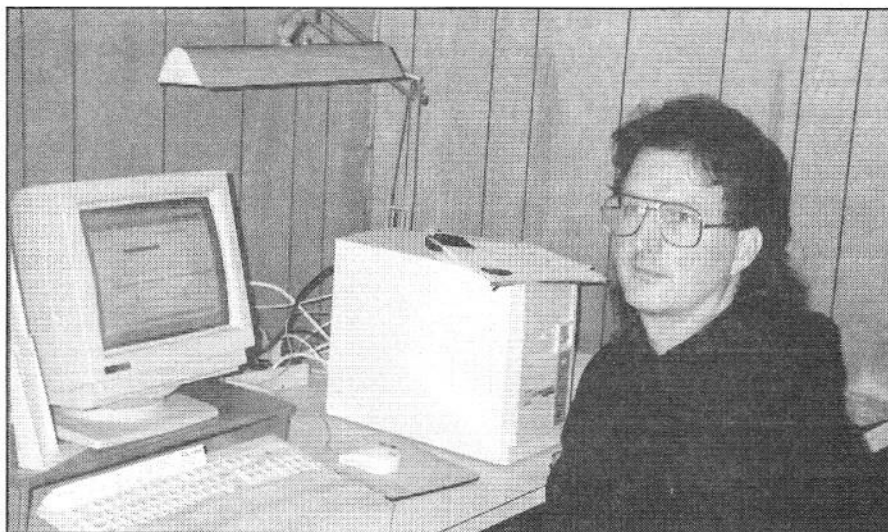
Our first year of experience with the Internet was certainly a roller-coaster ride. It began as: "Wouldn't it be a good idea," and proceeded to go to: "I can't believe it is this messy," to: "It seems to work if you don't ask it to do anything too tricky."

In October 1995 I was invited to join the Humboldt Community Access Group as 11th-hour help. Serendipitously enough, a talented young woman by the name of Corinne Kelly — an office education graduate — asked if she could work with me in the computer lab for advanced training, mostly in database design.

So I innocently said yes to both requests. Little did I know that I would be considered for the high honor of WebMaster with my assistant Corinne as WebMistress (though the appellation doesn't seem very elegant).

Then the mighty SaskTel, that sleeping giant of Saskatchewan technology, decided to stake its claim in the Internet. Gulp! It got all us little fishes in one bite. I can't say more about that in print, so e-mail me some time, and I'll get vitriolic.

Anyway — just when things were at their darkest, Don Flannagan, the administrator of the Community Access Group, asked if St. Peter's College



Br. Kurt Van Kuren, the WebMaster

would like to become the development site for the Humboldt Spirit and Soil project.

(It turns out that the history of the Humboldt area is basically the history of the abbacy, and all the archives for that history are in the basement of the monastery.)

This is where it gets interesting, and I have to bow out of the picture.

Fr. Martin, our abbey archivist — who had been collecting historical photos and letters about abbacy history for two years previous — now stepped in. His background work and the publication of an abbacy history

book gave the St. Peter's development team almost a full month's lead.

To bring things up to date: we should have an Abbey Home Page by spring. Our basic design will be called the Virtual St. Peter's.

We will use a clickable map developed from the original, highly imaginative 1908 plan of the ideal St. Peter's. Couldn't do it in physical reality, so we settled for cyberspace.

If you are interested in contributing to the Home Page, e-mail me at: stpetes@orion.sk.sympatico.ca. See you there.



Celine Wolsfeld with Fr. Francis Lohmer, Dorothy Wolsfeld and Abbot Peter Novecosky.

Jan. 4, 1996 — An "appreciation supper" honored Celine Wolsfeld, an Oblate, for 30 years of service as housekeeper in our parish rectories.

Jan. 9-10 — The Flying Fathers stayed at the abbey overnight. The benefits from their hockey game the next day went to St. Elizabeth Hospital and St. Peter's College.

Jan. 15 — The college will be linking into Internet which will be centred at the Humboldt Collegiate. Br. Kurt will be in charge of the college-abbey area of this communication network.

Muenster Diocese celebrates 75th

MUENSTER — On a warm day and under a sunny sky, the people of the Diocese of Muenster gathered at St. Peter's Abbey June 16 to celebrate a milestone in their journey of faith, the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the diocese.

The focal point of the morning's celebration was a mass of thanksgiving and joy. About 800 people joined in prayer with Abbot Peter Novocosky, Archbishop Peter J. Mallon of Regina, Bishop Blaise Morand of Prince Albert, retired abbot Jerome Weber and the priests of the Muenster Diocese.

In his homily Novocosky reviewed briefly the early history of the settlement, the establishment of schools and hospitals, and the beginnings of the Diocese of Muenster.

On May 16, 1921, Pope Benedict XV separated the territory known as St. Peter's Colony from the Diocese of Prince Albert, creating an abbey-nullius, a diocese headed not by a bishop but by the abbot of the local monastery.

"This diocese is unique in that it is a small rural diocese, but it is also the only diocese in Canada headed by an abbot," Novocosky said.

With a smile at the current bishop of Prince Albert, Novocosky gave a new twist to local history. In "paraphrasing" the first reading at the jubilee mass (Exodus 19:2-6), he noted that, just as the chosen people of old left Egypt and travelled through the desert, so "the people of this diocese forsook the wilderness to the north of them — that is, the Diocese of Prince Albert — and followed the call of God to become a people set apart, a people that Pope Benedict XV called an abbey-nullius."

Novocosky paid tribute to the many monks, sisters and Catholic laity for building the very active parishes over the years. God has abundantly blessed the people of this diocese, he said, noting that the celebration should last not for just one day but for an entire year.

A picnic-style lunch followed, prepared and served by the Knights of

Columbus and CWL ladies. The Little German Band of Humboldt provided entertainment.

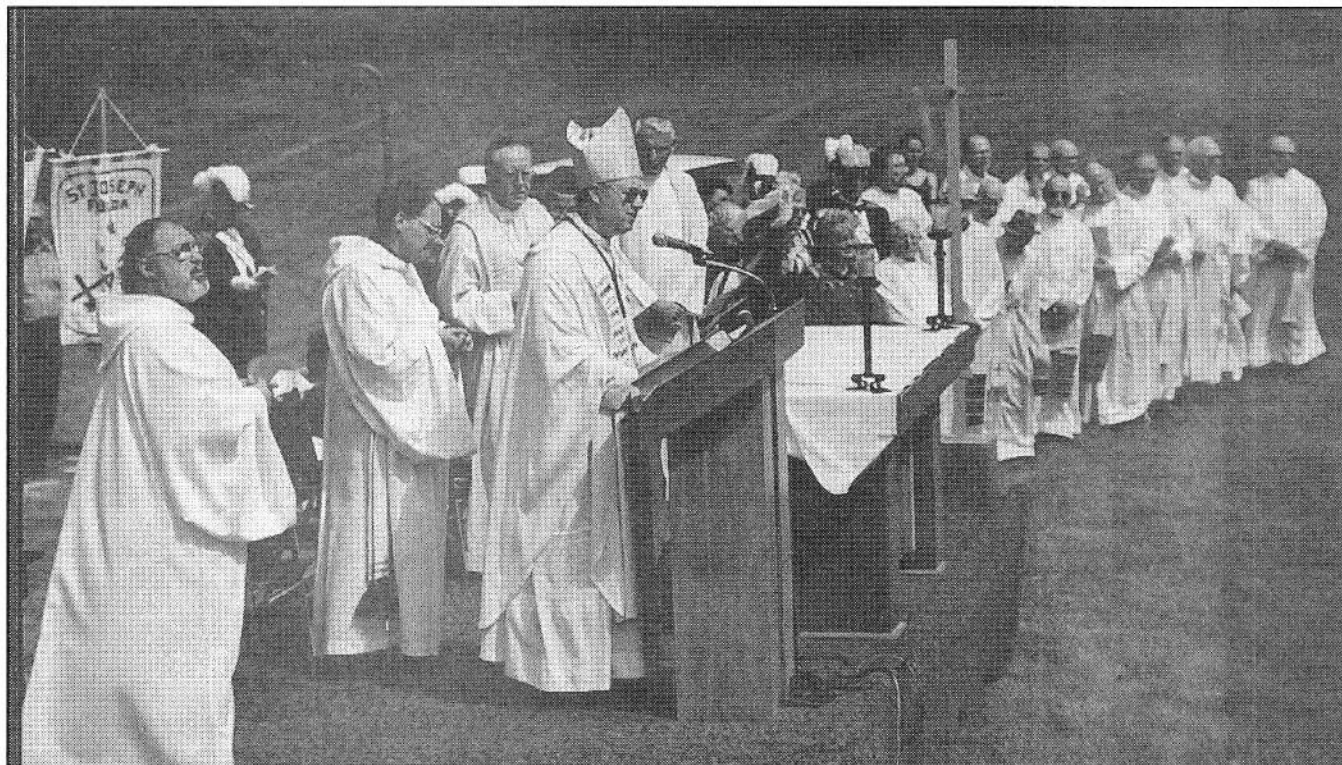
During the lunch break many people toured the displays in the college gym. Replicas of many of the parish churches were displayed, as well as banners and posters portraying the history of individual parishes.

The afternoon program was chaired by Bernadette Greuel of Bruno. Congratulations were offered by Archbishop Mallon of Regina who praised the people, past and present, for all the work done for God over the years.

The bishop of Prince Albert noted that, since the Diocese of Muenster was formed from the Prince Albert Diocese, the people of this diocese could be called his children.

"Coming from the mother diocese," Morand said, "a good mother has to check on her children occasionally. That's what I'm doing today — and

— Continued on next page



Abbot Peter Novocosky presided at the 75th anniversary jubilee mass June 16 at St. Peter's Abbey.

Bro. Conrad devoted to PM, CBC

If Br. Conrad had completed his 90th year with sound mind and body, he surely would have been tuned in to all the 60th anniversary celebrations on CBC Radio around Nov. 2, 1996.

For most of his monastic life, CBC Radio was his faithful companion. For the 50 years he worked tirelessly as circulation manager of the *Prairie Messenger*, his energies seemed to be enhanced by CBC programming.

Second to his dedication to the *Prairie Messenger* was his enthusiasm for vacation-time touring about the province.

Becoming a competent amateur photographer and collector of scenic postcards, maps and historic data, he climaxed annual vacations by assembling a bulky album of his trips. He carefully noted at the front of each book that he did this time-consuming work on Sundays and not during working hours.

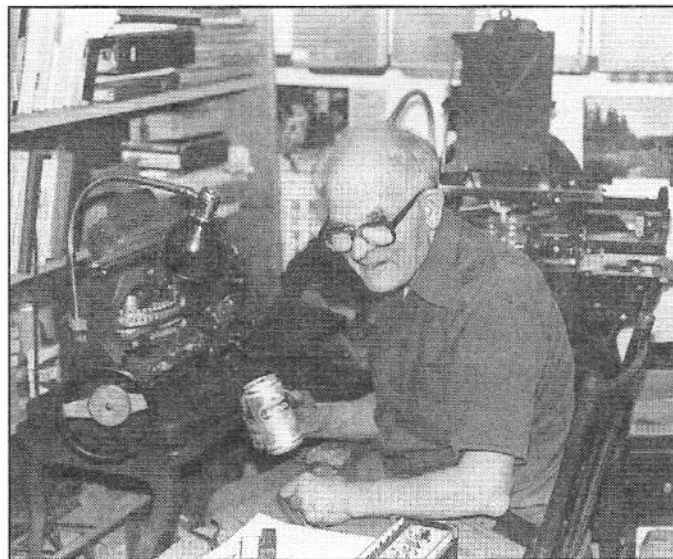
Born in Karktlustenau, Württemberg, Germany, Nov. 29, 1906, Francis Abs arrived in Lake Lenore in 1930 as

a farm laborer and became a professed monk of St. Peter's Abbey 10 years later, on Aug. 3, 1940.

Always a quiet, solitary, somewhat withdrawn monk, faithful in his duties, Br. Conrad had a basically cheerful disposition.

He welcomed the spirit of Vatican Council II and kept abreast of changes in the church through articles in the *Prairie Messenger*.

When his mental and physical faculties weakened, he still wanted to be useful with a hoe in the garden or doing simple "secretarial" tasks in the abbot's



Br. Conrad Abs

office.

Needing a lot of custodial attention in his last years because of Alzheimer's disease, he accepted quite patiently and gently the care he received from Br. Anthony Nuguyn.

Changes in faith life offer church a major challenge

Continued from previous page

they're doing fine."

Rev. Harry Rose offered greetings on behalf of the Humboldt and District Ministerial Association, as well as from his own congregations and from the Anglican Diocese of Saskatoon.

Rita Tagseth of Humboldt gave the keynote address. She remembered the glorious past of the diocese. She remembered too how the rural depopulation of Saskatchewan has affected this diocese in the very heart of the province.

Depopulation and the improvement of travel have led to a decline in parishes from 30 to 19. Several priests now take care of two and three parishes.

The sisters of St. Elizabeth and of St. Ursula, the two religious communities who, with the Benedictines, worked so hard to build up the diocese, are both experiencing a severe dearth of

vocations.

Tagseth noted that the faith life of the diocese is changing greatly, and this change is a major challenge to the local church. "The young people of today," she noted, "were born after the Depression and under a nuclear shadow. In an age of affluence and Armageddon, they are less concerned about material security than about basic human values."

"I am convinced that there is not only tremendous vitality here, but also a great potential for good." She begged that the church should make the changes necessary so as to take advantage of this potential.

Tagseth quoted a young man who told her, "There's a genuine religious revival going on, but the church is missing out on it."

"What can we do?" Tagseth asked. "Let's begin by being responsive, to trust our young people and listen to them.

"We must be as dedicated as they in fighting injustices. We must have a sense of responsibility, individually and collectively, for resolving the massive problems of today's society."

The new history of the diocese, *A Journey of Faith: St. Peter's Abbey: 1921-1996*, was launched during the jubilee celebration. Novacosky presented a complimentary copy to Colleen Hushagen of Muenster, whose submission won the name-the-history-book contest.

A surprise comedy act rounded out the program. In his own inimitable way, "Charlie Farquarson" mispronounced phrases and names, garbled his English, and poked fun at the Benedictines, the diocese and various social and political figures.

Many people thought this Charlie was indeed the real thing, but a closer examination proved him to be simply a good clone. — RM and AMB

Of pipe organs and poor memory

By William Thurmeier, OSB

I am happy to announce that we have made some real progress on the organ-building project since my return in October. I have the professional assistance of Br. Wolfgang Thiem who was a certified machinist in Germany before coming to Canada and whose precision work is a real asset. While I was in Winnipeg he did a superb job of releathering the three large air reservoir/regulators.

At present we are building a cabinet for the pipe organ switching system, and assembling the switching system. I hope to have it built and installed into the organ case by the middle of February.

Then we will begin to releather the windchests, most of which were built in 1945. I hope to have that work finished by the end of April. Then we will build the wind system, wire up the wind chests, and then begin the work on the pipes.

However, while I was rebuilding an old memory system which came from 1964 or so, the thought crossed my mind that this would be the time to invest in a modern memory system which would give the organist much greater facility and reliability. Such a system would cost \$4,500.

The present accumulated donations will not cover the cost. It would be a shame to install an outdated memory system in a new organ and then have to

spend much more money later on to upgrade it when the old one begins to fail.

Could you help? Anything you can contribute would be greatly appreciated. Cheques should be made out to the Pipe Organ Fund and you will receive an income tax reduction receipt.

Present Oblate program prospers

By Albert Ruetz, OSB

Oblate meetings are held at St. Peter's Abbey three times a year, where the Oblates join the monks in prayer and a meal.

Between 50 and 60 Oblates attend these meetings and also have a spiritual conference given by one of the monks. These also receive an Oblate letter three times a year as well as the Abbey

Newsletter. Oblates have been strong supporters of St. Peter's Abbey — their contributions paid for the furnishing in Sts. Peter & Paul Abbey Church.

The last three years they have been contributing to the Lenten Appeal of Alliance for International Monasticism (AIM), which supports Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries in Third World countries. They then receive the AIM newsletter.



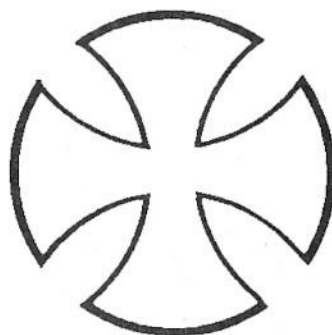
Bill Young and John Lily make final oblation.

The Saskatchewan Benedictines

invite you
to experience

Monastic Life

by living with the monks at
St. Peter's Abbey



To assist you
in discerning your life vocation
share some time with a
community of Benedictine
monks by contacting:

Richard Meidl, OSB

Vocation Director

St. Peter's Abbey

Box 10,

Muenster, SK S0K 2Y0

Ph: (306) 682-1791

Fax: (306) 682-1766

E-mail:

stpetes@orion.sk.sympatico.ca

A visitor's impressions of Brazil

By Basil Schaan, OSB

My first striking impression of Brazil was the big green hills. Later on as we got to see more of Brazil that was farther away from the coast the hills got dryer and browner.

Then I noticed the cleanliness of the people, how neat and clean they and their houses are in the midst of poverty.

I also noticed the openness or welcoming spirit of the people and especially the Ursuline sisters, particularly Sister Louise Hinz and Sister Jeannine Rondot, SMS, of Saskatoon.

I was impressed by the caring and devoted spirit of Sister Ana Lucia — the Brazilian junior of the OSUs.

I would say my experience was impressed upon me by different forms of learning.

Some of these experiences are:

— Learning the history of the Muenster mission from their perspective told by Sisters Claire Novocosky and Maria Doepker. Fr. Don Macgillivray filled me in a little bit too on both the Saskatoon mission and the Muenster mission team's start in Brazil.

— Learning the culture and way of life of the Brazilian people.

— Learning or answering challenging questions: questions from the people, Sister Claire and particularly from



Br. Basil Schaan with Sisters Claire Novocosky, Maria Doepker and Ana Lucia Duarte.

Fr. Emil April.

A common question from the people is, "How do you like Brazil?" or "Would you like to live here to help out like the other Canadian missionaries?"

My answers to these questions were, "Yes. Brazil is a good or nice country." And, "Yes, I would like to try to help."

Sister Claire's questions were challenging in a different way. She would ask, "What did you learn today?" or "What are you going to tell the people back home about Brazil?"

Fr. Emil would ask, "What do you

think of the church of União?" I said they are an active and alive (participating) church. But then he would toss in a second part to the question that would really challenge or stop me and make me think. "In what way are they different from the Saskatchewan church?" Or, "What are the signs of hope that you see that we can tell the people of Saskatoon-Saskatchewan?"

He was truly looking for the answers, not just from me but, I feel, for himself so that he could answer these questions with a fresh new look to the people who ask them of him.

Activities and goings-on around the abbey

By Martin Brodner, OSB

Our last chronicle ended on Nov. 20, 1995, and I guess we've had winter ever since. One monk last spring (April 20, 1996) figured out that we had winter for 7 1/2 months. For sure, it was one of the longest and coldest. I had a mass scheduled at the Villa in February, and it was -39° C! So, now that we are almost thawed out, we'll note what is still alive:

1996

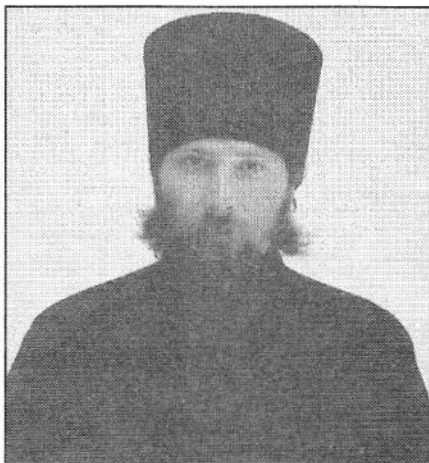
Jan. 27 — Br. Thomas returned from sabbatical leave, which was spent in St Louis, Mo., and in Saskatoon.

Jan. 28 — Terry Kraychuk, a former long-term guest, was ordained deacon in the Ukrainian Rite for the Winnipeg Eparchy.

— Duane Guina, spoke to the monks on sustainable agriculture, explaining how we could be involved. He will set up a pilot project on our grounds this spring.

Feb. 2 — A violin and piano concert was held in the abbey church of Sts. Peter and Paul. Artists were Tamara Hyrcak and Greg Schulte.

Feb. 6 — Br. Conrad was admitted to the hospital where he died on Feb.



Deacon Terry Kraychuk, a former long-term guest.

Activities, goings-on around the abbey

19 at the age of 89. He had been an Alzheimer's patient for several years.

Feb. 10 — On the feast of St. Scholastica, twin sister of St. Benedict, Abbot Peter blessed our new organ. The organ console is electronically equipped and is being used in our Divine Office. We await the installation of the pipes. The organ was named "Scholastica."

Feb. 13 — Fr. Richard, vocation director, appeared on the front page of the Saskatoon StarPhoenix in an article on vocations written by Peter Wilson. The article and picture were placed on the wire and appeared in other newspapers from B.C. to N.S.

Feb. 14 — With the organ all set up for use Fr. William will leave for Winnipeg to start his sabbatical leave.

Feb. 19 — Our Canadian \$2 coin goes into circulation! It's still a "no-namer" . . . eventually being called a 'twoney.'

Feb. 20 — A community meeting on communication skills, animated by Sr. Janet Malone, CND.

Feb. 28 — Agnes (August) Toennies, faithful worker in the kitchen and in the guest department for nine years, died of Lou Gehrig's disease.

— In early February, Marilyn Tebbe, our new guest department worker, and Mary Watson, Oblate guest, painted the kitchenette in the guest wing. The adjacent lounge has also received a new look.

— This month, work which was in progress for the past two years went into full swing on our abbacy (diocesan) history book. It is being printed to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of our Abbey-Nullius on May 6, 1921. Each parish and other abbacy organizations are submitting their stories. The archives was able to supply many resource materials and

photos. This book of 350 pages was ready for the jubilee mass on June 16, 1996.

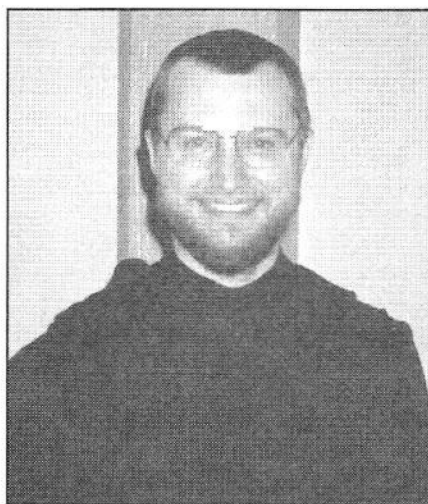
March 7 — Fr. Vernon James Weisgerber, born in Vibank, SK, was appointed bishop of Saskatoon, to succeed Bishop James Mahoney who died 13 months previously. We rejoice that both were alumni of St. Peter's College. "Wiggie," as we called him, was a student from 1952-1956. He was ordained and installed on May 3 in Saskatoon.

March 12 — DPC Spring Assembly. Gisele Bauche, secretary at the Catholic Centre, Saskatoon, was the guest speaker. Topic: "Goal Stories" which give meaning to life.

March 13 — Abbot Peter attends the Saskatchewan bishops meeting in Saskatoon. With four new bishops appointed in the past year Saskatchewan again has its full quota of bishops.

March 14 — Members of the three religious communities (OSB, OSE, OSU) had a meeting at the abbey.

March 21 — Br. Neil Pitzel of Regina, SK, pronounced his vows for three years on this Solemnity of St. Benedict.



Br. Neil takes his first vows.

March 23 — Oblate Day. Marcel and Theresa Roy, Hoey, SK, were enrolled as Oblate candidates. Many Oblates could not attend because of the terrific snow storm on March 22. A most furious storm preceded it on March 16.

March 1996 — Marks the 20th anniversary of the first issue of our Abbey Newsletter. (See write-up on page 16.)

April 1 — Holy Monday. Archbishop Peter Mallon (Regina) paid us his first visit and celebrated the Chrism Mass for the abbacy in the evening. He drove to Prince Albert the next morning in another snow storm.

April 17 — Sr. Donna Kelly, CND, national director of liturgy (Ottawa), spoke at our final Diocesan Assembly to a packed Jerome Assembly Room.

May 3 — Fr. James Weisgerber was ordained bishop in Saskatoon.

May 8-11 — Prairie Women's Spirituality Workshop. One of the lecturers was Sr. Mary Coswin, OSB, of St. Benedict's Monastery, Winnipeg. She spoke on the life, art and music of St. Hildegard von Bingen.

May 17 — Br. Demetrius returns to the abbey after completing his theological studies at Mt. Angel, Ore.

May 26-28 — Frs. Daniel and Martin attended a diocesan financial workshop in Winnipeg.

May 29 — Seeding finally began at the abbey, after being delayed by abundant snow this past winter and early spring rains.

JUNE — Beginning in June the next few months were jubilee months for both abbey and college highlighting the 75th anniversaries of the abbacy (diocese) and of the college.

Activities, goings-on around the abbey

June 9 — Abbot Peter celebrates in the cathedral the jubilee eucharist for 25th, 40th, 50th and up wedding anniversaries of the abbacy.

June 10 — Work on the Home Page for Internet began. Humboldt and area were invited to supply a Home Page. The abbey input amounted to almost 300 pages of information on St. Peter's Colony.

June 10-12 — Three days of abbacy jubilee bus tours to visit all the sites of the churches in the abbacy.

June 16 — Outdoor eucharist at 11 a.m. marking the 75th anniversary of our abbacy, begun on May 6, 1921. There was a program at 2 p.m. at which the jubilee history book, *A Journey of Faith*, went on sale. About 850 people gathered for this jubilee day.

June 16-20 — Abbey retreat conducted by Fr. Gerald Kirsch, OSB, of St. Martin's Abbey, Lacey, Wash.

June 22 — Oblate Day. Bill Young and John Lily make final oblation.

June 29 — Fr. Demetrius was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Blaise Morand. Ten monks from the U.S.A. came for the ordination.



Frs. Martin Brodner, Philip Loehr and George Brodner. Missing is Br. Gerald Moran.

July 11 — Frs. George, Martin and Philip renewed their 60th anniversary vows of profession and Br. Gerald his 10th anniversary vows.

July 20 — Mount Carmel pilgrimage in this jubilee year. Fr. Ken Koep of Regina, an SPC alumnus, was the homilist. 1997 will be the 75th anniversary of Mount Carmel.

July 28 — Tri-community (OSB-OSE-OSU) Day hosted by the Sisters of St. Elizabeth in Humboldt. It was noted that 15 members of these three communities died within the past year.

Aug. 2-3 — SPC Alumni/ae reunion, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the opening of St. Peter's College in November 1921.

Aug. 30 — Internet open house. Visitors appreciated this opportunity to get glimpses of what to expect on our Home Page.

What a coincidence to have Abbot Bruno Doerfler's great grandnephew, mother and family visit us. They were also the first to view our contributions to the page. The first portrait to be displayed was that of Abbot Bruno Doerfler!



Visiting monks from the United States attended Fr. Demetrius Wasyluniuk's ordination on June 29, 1996.

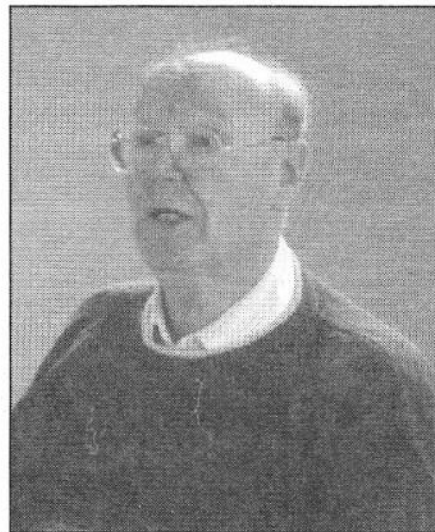
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Guest master's photo journal . . .



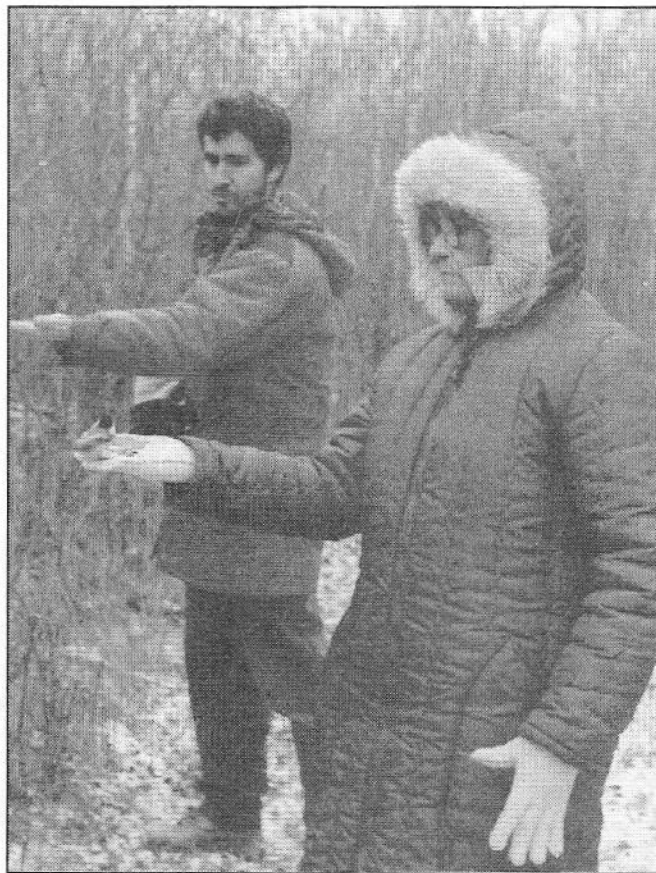
Fr. Demetrius Wasyluniuk giving his first blessing to Sr. Marian Noll, with Terry LeClaire and Pat Whittiker next in line.



Al Gerwing named Churchperson of the Year by the Prairie Messenger.



Sr. Valerie Swenson, OSB, House of Bread Monastery, Nanaimo, B.C., formerly of Saskatchewan.



German Jaramillo with Dona Lourdes

Guest master's photo journal . . .



Sisters of Mission Service

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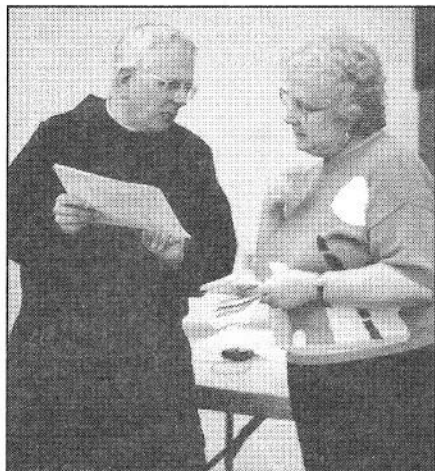
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20th anniversary of Abbey Newsletter

By Martin Brodner, OSB

The monks of St. Peter's Abbey began publishing the quarterly Abbey Newsletter in March 1976. This was shortly after the high school had closed its doors (1972) and the transition was made to transform Severin Hall from a residence for up to 160 students to a guest department for guests and for people coming for workshops, retreats, etc.



Fr. Paschal Cheline, OSB, with Donna Poelking

Nov. 30 — A three-day workshop on liturgy for the monks and the entire abbacy. It was animated by Fr. Paschal Cheline, OSB, of Mt. Angel Abbey, Ore.

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

Editor: Thomas Ward, OSB.

Regular contributors: Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB; Albert Ruetz, OSB; Martin Brodner, OSB, Humboldt Journal, Prairie Messenger.

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Logo by Kurt van Kuren, OSB.

Printed by St. Peter's Press, Muenster, Sask.

The newsletter would provide a link between the abbey and many friends and benefactors of the abbey.

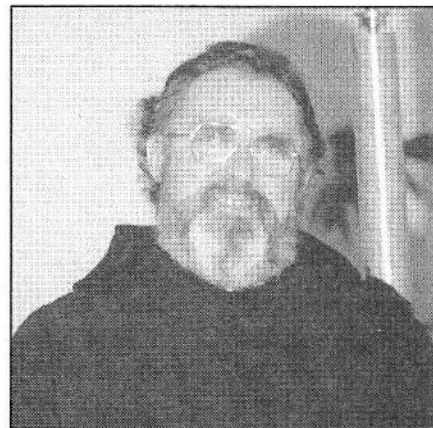
Fr. Damien Yaskowich was its first editor and main photographer until he was appointed resident pastor for Carmel, Peterson and Pilger parishes in 1987.

Br. Gerald Moran succeeded Fr. Damien as editor and photographer with the Fall 1987 issue.

Fr. Norbert Schwinghammer's more detailed Abbey Chronicle also began appearing in the fall of 1987.

Upon retiring to the abbey in 1993, Fr. Martin Brodner became Br. Gerald's assistant in putting out the newsletter.

Br. Thomas Ward has now, with this issue, taken over from Br. Gerald as editor.



Br. Thomas Ward

The newsletter began as a quarterly, and now appears twice a year. This is its 56th issue.

Deaths

**Since the last newsletter the following have passed into eternity:

1995

Dec. 25 - Frances Kimmen, Oblate

1996

Feb. 19 - Br. Conrad Abs, OSB

Feb. 28 - Agnes (August) Toennies, former staff member

March 8 - Sr. Veronica Schmidt, OSE

May 16 - Sr. Cecilia Bartch, OSU

May 20 - Sr. Johanna Gossner, OSU

May 31 - Pat Weber, brother to Fr. Jerome Weber, OSB

June 13 - Sr. Jane Muyres, OSU, sister of Fr. Daniel Muyres, OSB

Oct. 11 - Sr. Tecla Gartner, OSE

Nov. 10 - Sr. Loyola Wasserman, OSU

Sept. 6 — University classes began with about 100 students. This was 50 less than last year. Colleges in general have noted a marked decline in enrolment this fall. Fr. Demetrius has been added to the college staff and is the director of student services; Br. Neil is part-time assistant in the library.

Sept. 16 — Charles Hughes (Calgary) and Frank Boulet (Winnipeg) entered our candidate program.

Oct. 26 — Oblate Day.

Nov. 9 — Workshop by Bede Hubbard, assistant secretary to CCCB, on the three-year preparation for the Great Jubilee 2000.

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

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