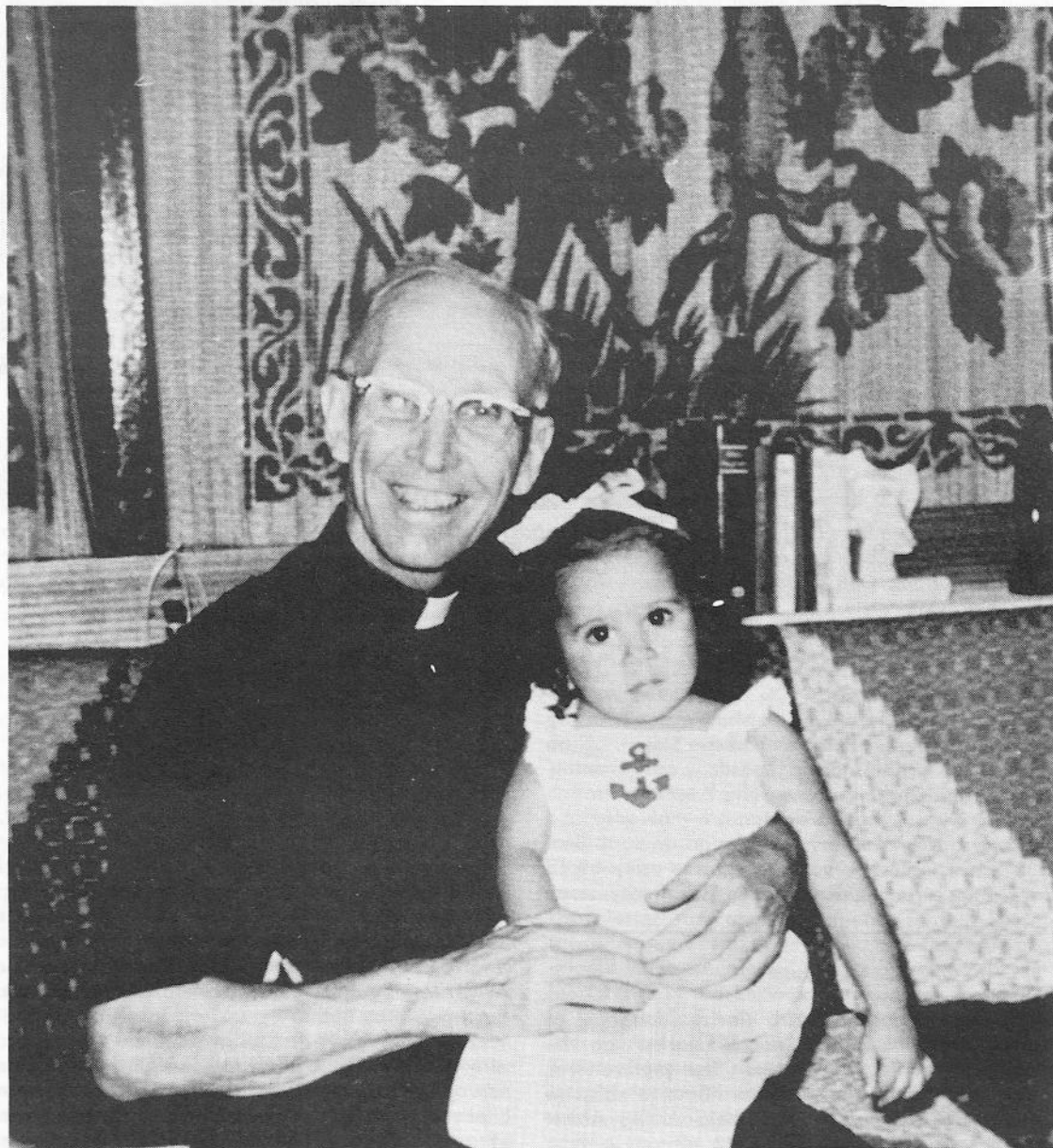


ST. PETER'S ABBEY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 1, no. 2
June, 1976





Before some members of the abbacy missionary team returned home for holidays and studies, the team in Maceio, Brasil consisted of, left to right: Sisters Imelda Doecker, OSU, and Dolores Jansen, OSE, Father Bernard Stauber, OSB, Sister Claire Novecosky, OSU, Father Sylvester Vredegoor, OSB, and Sister Sida Hrbachek, OSE.

Abbot's message

It was suggested I write a short account of my recent visit to our confreres and the Sisters of the abbacy who are in Maceio, Brasil.

After leaving Saskatoon June 7, going through Toronto, New York, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and Aracaju, I arrived at my destination on June 8 at 2:30 p.m. The first person I recognized as I walked toward the airport was Father D. McGillivray, since

he stood head and shoulders above everyone else; as I got closer I could recognize Fathers Sylvester and Bernard, Sisters Dolores, Imelda, Claire and Sida, and was warmly welcomed by each of them.

That evening I offered Holy Mass in Sao Jose, my 35th anniversary of ordination, with Father Sylvester. After Mass there was a short program of songs, speeches of welcome and congratulations to mark the occasion, by people from the various parishes who had been informed previously of the anniversary. My own remarks during the Mass and at the program were ably translated into Portuguese by Father Sylvester.

During the days that followed, I had occasion to offer Mass and give short talks in all the churches served by Father Sylvester and the Sisters — five in all. Everywhere I was received warmly by everyone I met, and I learned again how much the priests

COVER

Abbot Jerome Weber holds Cerize, daughter of Nascimento who is the social worker at the community center in Correia. The picture was taken in Father Sylvester's new home, a room in the back of the church in Correia during Abbot Jerome's visit to Brasil, June 7-22.

and Sisters are appreciated. This was especially evident in the farewell programs given for Sisters Dolores and Sida at Sao Jose on the afternoon of June 13 and in the evening after a Mass in Correia. They began their journey to Canada June 15, planning stopovers in Brasilia, Lima, and Mexico.

That same day, in the afternoon, I went with Father Bernard to Colonia Leopoldina, about 1½ hours by VW bus, where he lives now, and from which he looks after two other parishes and several chapels in an area in which there are probably as many people as we serve in the entire abbacy.

I spent two days with him in the parish house in which he lives. The housekeeper and cook, Judithhe, comes in daily. The parish seems quite well organized, has a secretary, three Brazilian Sisters who do a great deal of the pastoral work, baptizing, catechizing, etc. It is able to support him so that he does not have to draw upon the Brazilian fund for anything pertaining to parochial work. Together we visited a few homes where there were sick, and he anointed one old lady. We concelebrated Mass in the rather large parish church at which there was a good attendance both evenings. On Thursday morning, the feast of Corpus Christi, we concelebrated in Novo Lino, a church build by Dutch money in 1966. The parishes which Father Bernard looks after were attended until recently by Dutch priests of the Sacred Heart.

Father Sylvester and the two Ursulines arrived there that day in time for dinner which we took at the Sisters. Then we left for Olinda, a two-hour drive, and arrived at the Benedictine monastery there in time for the Mass at 5:30, and the procession with the Blessed Sacrament inside the courtyard. Father Sylvester and I stayed there that night, and I had a good visit with Abbot Basilio, whom I had met on previous occasions and who speaks English quite well.

By 7:30 next morning we were on the way to the airport in Recife since Sister Martha, OSU, of Bruno, was expected to arrive at 9 a.m. However, due to plane trouble at Belem, at the mouth of the Amazon river, she was delayed. Father Sylvester and I drove back to Maceio with the new red VW; the two Sisters waited for the next plane, due at 5 p.m., on which Sister Martha did arrive. Then the

three of them returned to Maceio by bus, and Father Sylvester met them at the bus terminal.

On Saturday Father Sylvester and I had dinner with Archbishop Miguel, who had returned from Europe the previous Thursday; he had gone to Rome to be present at Cardinal Lorscheider's celebration. (He is bishop of Fortaleza, from which city Dom Miguel had come.) He again expressed his deep appreciation for the help given by the abbacy, and would welcome more. The former archbishop, Dom Adelmo, lives with him.

There have been very many visible changes in Maceio since I first visited it in 1965: better roads, more buildings, more cars, TVs, and right in the parish limits, on the shore of the ocean, a big industrial plant by Dupont is still in process of being completed, designed to exploit the salt deposits.

There has been a social center at Sao Jose for many years, and now one in Correia, in which there are meetings and various courses given; doctors and dentists are available for the poor there a few times a week, and this is true also of Ouricuri, where Marival, a woman social worker is employed. Nascimento is still working in Correia, though no longer full-time, since he has work with young boys elsewhere. Father Sylvester bought a machine for making blocks out of cement, clay and sand which are to be used in building homes for the poor. (I saw one such house which has been completed and looks good.)

The spiritual impact is much more intangible, of course, but there is still a great deal being done. Holy Mass is offered in the five churches according to a regular schedule; instructions are given to parents who wish their children baptized; courses are organized for youth and other groups; the teaching of religion is fostered in the schools; homes, especially where there are sick, are visited. The Sisters are always available to anyone who comes to their house. Their presence is a great consolation and encouragement to many people there. A number of really good and dedicated lay people have developed, and they are providing leadership in the various communities, especially in Correia, Sao Jose and Ouricuri. I certainly got the impression that Father Sylvester and the two Sisters there now are happy in their work with the people. Father Bernard can tell you more about his work in Colonia after he arrives for a holiday of several months on July 2.



On June 30 three confreres celebrated their golden jubilee of profession, left to right: Fathers Gregory Gasser, Augustine Nenzel and Alphonse Ludwig.

Golden jubilees

During the annual retreat (June 28-July 1) three members of the Benedictine community of St. Peter's Abbey solemnly renewed the monastic vows which they had made 50 years ago: Fathers Gregory (Peter) Gasser, Augustine (Albert) Nenzel, and Alphonse (Hubert) Ludwig.

Peter Gasser, Albert Nenzel, and Hubert Ludwig belonged to the first class of students when St. Peter's College opened in October 1921. The first few months of classes and studies were spent on planks over nail-kegs, and under finishing carpenters' and painters' scaffolding. But even before the end of the first year, and throughout their student days, the trio were active and outstanding in an astonishing number of extra-curricular organizations: a public speaking and debating club, a glee club, a band, an orchestra, a dramatic club, and a baseball team which competed on an equal basis with the semi-professional teams of the area during the '20s.

They entered the novitiate at St. Peter's Abbey on July 8, 1925 and made their monastic vows on July 17, 1926. During the years of their seminary studies at St. Peter's all three filled heavy assignments of teaching and supervising in St. Peter's College. They were ordained to the priesthood on June 29, 1932 by Bishop Joseph Prud'homme. For a few years thereafter they continued their activities together on the College staff, also assisting in the parishes of the abbacy on weekends and during the festive seasons, and giving religious instruction to the country-school children during summer vacations. After this their work diversified.

Father Gregory was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa, Oct. 16, 1896. He came to Leofeld with his parents in 1903. In 1910, when the family moved to Humboldt, he worked as call-boy for the CNR, then, first as delivery boy and for many years as head clerk at Bruser's store. He was drafted into the army just before the end of World War I, and

remained just long enough to become an expert trumpeter in the military band at Regina.

Father Gregory has resided at St. Peter's Abbey ever since his entry into the monastic community July 8, 1925, except for several summers and one year at Laval University, Quebec, where he obtained an MA degree in French. For 21 years (1926-1947) he taught almost every subject on the high school curriculum. For 30 years (1939-1969) he taught French on the university level in St. Peter's Junior College. He has a long record of parochial service in St. Peter's Abbey: assistant at Muenster and St. Gregory (1942-1947); pastor of Muenster and St. Gregor (1947-1964); pastor of Peterson and Dana (1966-1970).

Father Augustine was born in Nenzel, Nebraska, Dec. 19, 1901, and arrived at Rosthern March 21, 1903, in a snowstorm. He began his elementary schooling at Muenster, continued it at the mission school at Cranbrook, B.C., where his father was ranch foreman, and completed it at St. Louis College of the Oblate Fathers at New Westminster, B.C., in 1917. He returned to Muenster with his family in June 1917 and spent the next three years working on his father's farm, with time out in the late fall for custom-threshing with a steam outfit in the Rosetown district.

Father Augustine resided at St. Peter's Abbey for 30 years after his ordination (1932-1962), with the exception of two years sick-leave at Cudworth and one year in the Saskatchewan Sanatorium, Saskatoon. Alumni of St. Peter's College remember him especially as student prefect for eight years, student chaplain for 11 years, and director of dramatics for 20 years, during which period the students presented at least one, and usually two, major dramatic productions each year. He was editor of the *Prairie Messenger* from 1955 to 1962, and weekend chaplain at St. Ursula's Academy and Convent, Bruno, during the same period. Since 1962 he has been assistant pastor and chaplain at Bruno and Humboldt, and pastor at Bruno (1969-1970), Carmel (1964-1967), St. Benedict (1970 to the present), and Middle Lake with Bethany Village (1972 to the present).

Father Alphonse was born on May 24, 1905, at Fulda, Sask. (then still North West Territories). He moved with his family to Bruno in 1915 and took his elementary schooling there from the pioneer Ursuline Sisters Mother Antonia and Mother Agatha. After school hours he worked as printer's apprentice on the *Bruno Leader*. After graduating from high school at St. Peter's College, he declined

an offer from a Minneapolis baseball team, and entered the novitiate at St. Peter's Abbey on July 8, 1925.

After his ordination to the priesthood in 1932 Father Alphonse continued to teach at St. Peter's College until 1938. He was prefect of students and sports director for two years (1932-1934), coaching outstanding hockey teams. From 1934-1938 he was business manager of St. Peter's Press, during a time of expansion in both circulation and equipment. While still residing at St. Peter's Abbey he filled a number of parochial assignments: assistant at Fulda (1935) and Humboldt (1936); pastor of St. Agnes parish, Peterson (1935-1939); first pastor of Holy Martyr's parish, Middle Lake (1935-1939). From 1939 to the present he has been resident pastor of the following parishes: Carmel and Immaculate Conception (1939-1948); St. Benedict (1948-1960); Englefeld and LeRoy (1960-1970); Naicam (1970 to the present).

During the years of his pastoral ministry Father Alphonse has supervised an extraordinary number of construction projects: the church hall (used as the first church) at Middle Lake, 1936; Our Lady of Mt. Carmel church, 1947; St. Benedict church, 1958; Englefeld rectory, 1961; LeRoy, remodeling and extension of the church (1964); Naicam, remodeling and extension of the church (1971-1972). During the building program at St. Peter's in the '60s he served on the building board and acted as assistant foreman.



Father Philip Loehr was an official Canadian Non-Government Organization delegate to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat) at Vancouver May 31-June 11. While at the conference he met Angela Conway, who pioneered the hermit lifestyle at St. Peter's Abbey (1969-1974) and who now lives in Vancouver.

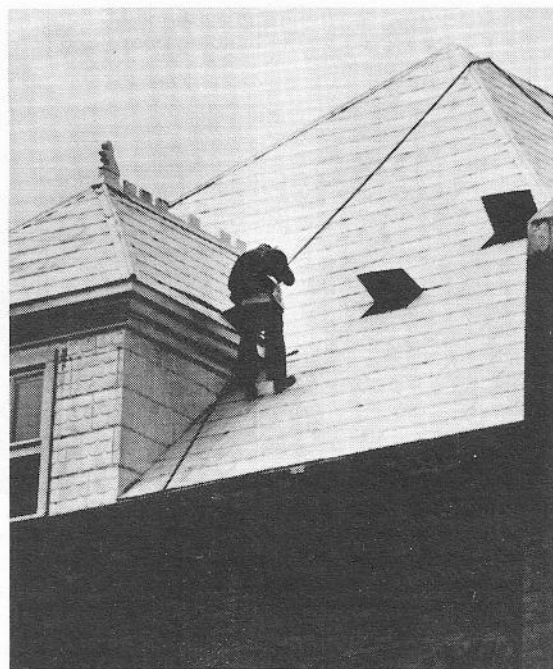


Storm strikes

A storm with winds up to 100 mph struck central and southwestern Saskatchewan the early morning of June 4. St. Peter's Abbey was in the path of the storm, one of the worst in the province's history.

One of the trees that was blown over is shown in the top photo. Brother Francis Fortney, who took charge of most of the clean-up operations, estimated that about 150 trees planted on the abbey grounds were damaged, most of them by having their tops broken off. In the picture at the left, Brother Oswald King is the brave man at the end of the rope on the steep roof of Michael Building repairing some of the shingles damaged by the high winds.

Much damage was sustained by the trees at St. Peter's Cathedral. About 125 pine trees were blown over and had to be cleared, and many others had their tops blown off.



Guestmaster's diary

April 25: Thirty-five couples took a marriage preparation course at St. Peter's on four consecutive Sundays, beginning April 25. Father Werner Renneberg was co-ordinator of the course, and he assembled a lot of talented speakers and animators for the course (including Fathers Florian Renneberg and Daniel Muyres and Brother Thomas Gerwing).

April 30: Twenty-five young people of Melville parish made a weekend retreat at St. Peter's.

May 29: Thirty students of Seneca College, Toronto, made an overnight stop at the abbey. They were all "new" Canadians, and their tour was partly for immersion in the English language and for Canadian acculturation.

June 19: The Humboldt branch of Alcoholics Anonymous sponsored a two-day AA rally at St. Peter's which drew 300 people.

June 20: The 42-voice Prince Albert boys' choir and the Muenster elementary school choir held a

choral workshop at St. Peter's under the direction of Nancy Vang of New York. The two choirs sang at a public concert in the college gym on June 26. Miss Vang, a fine soprano as well as teacher, also sang at this concert.

June 21: Eight Elizabethan Sisters made a directed retreat at the abbey under the direction of Father George L. Drury, SJ. Several other people have come to the abbey to make a retreat.

Deceased brethren and relatives

Father Claude Viktora, St. Procopius Abbey, died April 13.

Brother Bernard Scheier, St. Bede Abbey, died May 24.

Father Finian Brinster, Assumption Abbey, died May 27.

Father Joseph Barkus, St. Mary's Abbey, died June 1.

Father Fabian Thomas Sexton, St. Martin's Abbey, died June 18.

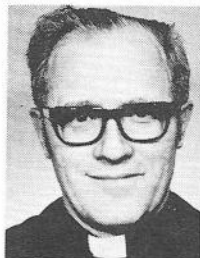
Amelia Gerwing, mother of Brother Thomas, died April 1.



The renovated and newly painted dormitory area in the arena, with accommodations for 100 people, is being used by the sports camps this summer. Meanwhile the renovation of Severin Hall is expected to be completed by the end of July according to foreman Father Andrew Britz.

Silver jubilee

During the annual retreat, Father Werner Renneberg renewed the monastic vows which he made 25 years ago.



Fr. Werner

Werner Thomas Renneberg was born on April 22, 1925, in Leafeld, Sask., the oldest parish in the abbacy. He received his elementary education there, from the Ursuline Sisters. After working on his parent's farm for seven years, he took his high school and university courses at St. Peter's College, and, along with Daniel Gerwing, joined the community of St. Peter's Abbey as a novice in June 1950. He made his first monastic vows June 16, 1951, and was ordained to the priesthood June 1, 1957, by Archbishop Michael O'Neill of Regina.

Already during his student years at St. Peter's, Father Werner manifested a keen interest in community building on every level, assiduously studying the social encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII and Pius XII. At St. John's University, Collegeville, Minn., where he took his seminary studies, he acquainted himself with the Rural Life Movement. After some years of teaching and pastoral work at the abbey, he took a year off for studies (1969-1970) and received a certificate from the Coady International Institute, Antigonish, N.S., for advanced studies in Social Leadership and Community Development. Since then many communities of St. Peter's Abbey have benefited by his dedication and experience. At Muenster he was the prime mover in the development of St. Peter's Park and camping grounds on the banks of Wolverine Creek, with a swimming pool and a ski hill, affectionately named Mount Werner. During the past three years he has taken an active part in the development of Futuristic Industries, Humboldt, a work-center for the handicapped.

Since his ordination, Father Werner has had many community assignments: He taught in St. Peter's College for two years (1957-1959). From 1959-1967 he was press manager of St. Peter's Press, during one of its periods of expansion, in housing, equipment, and personnel. From 1967-1969 he was assistant at St. Augustine's parish, Humboldt. Since 1970 he has been pastor of St. Peter's Cathedral parish, Muenster, and St. Gregory's parish, St. Gregor.



Father Maurice Weber, principal of St. Peter's College, presents the Severin Award of \$50 to Maureen McConnell and Kiply Luchan, both of Humboldt. The award is named after Abbot Severin Gertken and is given to the first-year arts and science student obtaining the best scholastic average at St. Peter's College. This year the two students obtained similar averages, making it necessary to have two award winners.



Brother Justus Trettel received some visitors from Cloquet and Duluth, Minn. June 6-9. They are, left to right: Sister Adriette, Sister Clare Marie, Mrs. Irene Trettel, Mrs. Mary Trettel and Marie Burggraff.

NEXT ISSUE: Deadline for copy: Sept. 21



Brother Douglas Schmidt gives the Lake Lenore grade 6 students a close look at the chalice from the altar of the chapel in the museum.

The museum

St. Peter's museum, which was revived recently under the direction of Father Rudolph Novacosky and which has expanded considerably since 1972, has been a busy place for tourists and visitors to the abbey this spring. Over 450 visitors of all ages have toured the museum in the last three months. Visitors have come from as far away as Hong Kong, Uruguay, Turkey and Switzerland.

The museum consists of eight rooms depicting the church, school and home life of the early settlers in the area. Brothers Jude Marco and Douglas Schmidt are the main tour guides. About a dozen groups of students from various schools in the area toured the abbey grounds and museum this spring.

Personnel notes

Father Wilfred Hergott was in St. Elizabeth Hospital June 22-July 5 for a check up. Although somewhat weaker, he continues to take part in the community activities at the abbey.

Father Gregory Gasser got a one-day jump on

the rest of Canada as he took the national census of the monks and those living on the abbey grounds with great dispatch on May 31.

Father Augustine Nenzel had to batch for six weeks as Anne Boltz, his sister and housekeeper, 80, fell, cracked her hip and had to recuperate in the hospital. His brother, George Nenzel of Calgary (a member of the community from 1930-33), took himself another wife on June 26. His first wife, Janet Gray, sister of Father James Gray, was killed in a car accident five years ago. His present wife lost her husband in a car accident about the same time. Father Augustine also reports that he has 16 weddings lined up this summer in his two parishes of St. Benedict and Middle Lake. With the average number of wedding usually about half a dozen a year, Father Augustine asks, "Why so many? Could it be because it's leap year or because the end of the world — and of marriage — is nigh, as some are so sure of?"

Fathers Augustine Nenzel, Philip Loehr, Alfred Engele and Werner Renneberg attended a Renewal in the Spirit retreat in St. Albert, Alta., April 19-22.

Father William Gehlen entered University

Hospital, Saskatoon on June 9 for treatment for arthritis.

Father Martin Brodner was the representative for western Canada at the annual meeting of the National Council for Liturgy at Niagara Falls May 12-14. He was camp chaplain for the grade 8 class of St. Augustine school during their trip to Camp Monahan June 8-11. He preached a retreat for the Sisters of Zion, Saskatoon, July 4-10.

On July 7 the Brodner brothers, *Brothers Gregory and John* and *Fathers George and Martin*, received a visit from *Father Leonard C. Kiure*, Tanzania. He will celebrate his silver jubilee of priesthood with them at Dysart on July 11. Their parents had paid for his seminary education.

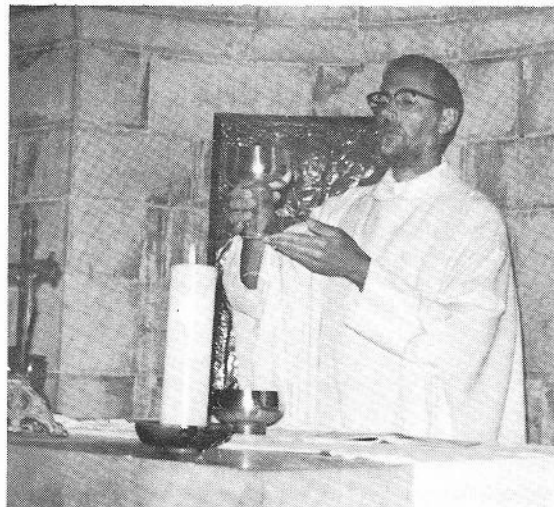
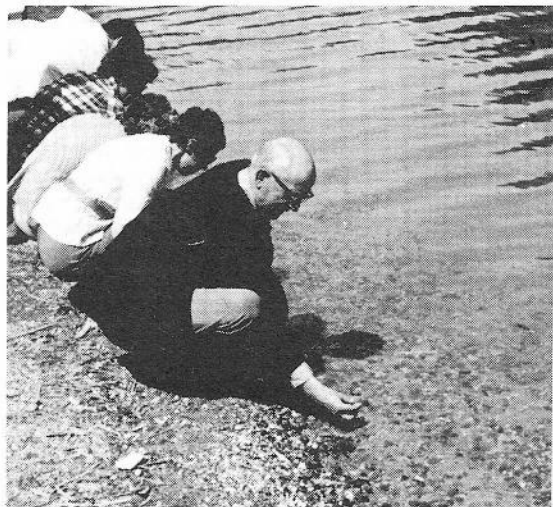
Father Albert Ruetz is attending a five-week institute on spiritual direction for diocesan priests and male religious at Loyola House, Guelph, Ont., July 17-Aug. 21. The core of this institute will be a prayer experience in silence based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Another phase will be a reflection and sharing on the prayer experience. These reflections will touch upon some of the ascetical principles of prayer as well as some of the psychological dimensions involved in the art of spiritual direction.

Father Maurice Weber plans to go to San

Anselmo, Rome for a year of studies in theology next year. *Father Andrew Britz* will be the acting principal of St. Peter's College while *Father Maurice* is gone.

Father Lawrence DeMong left for Ottawa July 4 to work for several weeks on the grade 5 program of the Canadian Catechism. It will be the first one in the "new era" of the Canadian Catechism, i.e., it will be completely created by a team of English Canadian catechists.

Father Michael Pomedli attended the 50th anniversary of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in New York, April 23-25. He also attended the Catholic Press Association meeting in Washington, D.C., May 4-7, where he picked up one second prize and two third prizes for the *Prairie Messenger*. On his trip he also visited PM writers and photographers in Winnipeg, spoke to the Winnipeg-St. Boniface CWL, and appeared on Winnipeg TV and radio. During that time the PM was featured in a Winnipeg community newspaper, *Fort Lance*. During his trip he also toured parts of the Maritime provinces. On July 2 *Father Michael* received permission to take a year's leave of absence from the monastery. He plans to live in Humboldt. He will continue to work with the *Prairie Messenger* and teach philosophy at St. Peter's College.



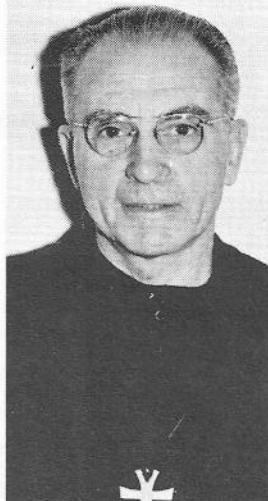
Father Edward Benning picks up a souvenir rock from the Jordon River (left) and *Father Leo Hinz* celebrates Mass in the crypt of Dormition Abbey basilica in Jerusalem during their 30-day pilgrimage-retreat in the Holy Land March 21-April 21.

Father Andrew Britz took time out of his busy schedule as foreman of the renovation of Severin Hall to preach a retreat in a parish in Brandon, Man. April 2-4 as well as to give a series of talks this spring to the staff of St. Elizabeth Hospital.

Brothers Thomas Gerwing and Bede Hubbard supervised the compilation of a mailing list of almost 5,000 names of former residents of the area as well as the list of 85 1903 pioneers alive today. A special issue of the May 30 PM was put together by Brother Thomas and Brother Bede and sent to all former residents of the area informing them of the celebrations planned for the 75th anniversary of St. Peter's Colony in 1978. Brother Thomas will be giving a week-long course at St. Peter's College for the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation in August on the Kodaly choral method.

Father Peter Novecosky spoke about Benedictine monastic life to almost 1,000 students of O'Neill High, Regina May 25-26. On June 2 he spoke on the monastic lifestyle to students at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.

Fathers Andrew Britz and Damian Yaskowich and *Brother Bede Hubbard* have been named to a committee to study the monastic habit.



Abbot Alban Boulton, OSB, resigned abbot of St. Anselm Abbey, Washington, D.C., preached the community retreat June 28-July 1.



Father Bernard Stauber returned to the abbey July 2 after working in Maceio, Brasil for three and a half years. He plans to return to Brasil in October.



Maureen Forrester, Canada's internationally famed contralto, visited St. Peter's Abbey and had lunch with some of the members of the community on April 21, prior to her evening performance in Humboldt.

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