

# *St. Peter's Abbey Newsletter*



Vol. 21 No. 2 Spring 1999

## **Novices make first profession**



*Abbot Peter Novecosky with Brs. Jean-Luc Cotto and Paul Paproski*

# A message from Abbot Peter's desk

Dear friends,

As winter rolls around into spring and the lenten season into the Easter season we both see and feel newness of life. And that is something we all look forward to.

It hits us in a special way in a rural community which is so closely tied to the changing of the seasons.

We rejoice also with the new membership in our community. As reported elsewhere, Br. Jean-Luc Cotto and Br. Paul Paproski completed their year of novitiate and made temporary vows on March 22.

The feast of St. Benedict, normally celebrated on March 21, was postponed for a day this year because March 21 fell on a Sunday.

The community also welcomes back three members who were gone for much of this year. Fr. Lawrence DeMong

returned April 26 after spending almost a year in União dos Palmares, Brazil. His ministry there enabled Fr. Emile April to spend a year in Canada to discern his future ministry. He has decided to return to work in Brazil.

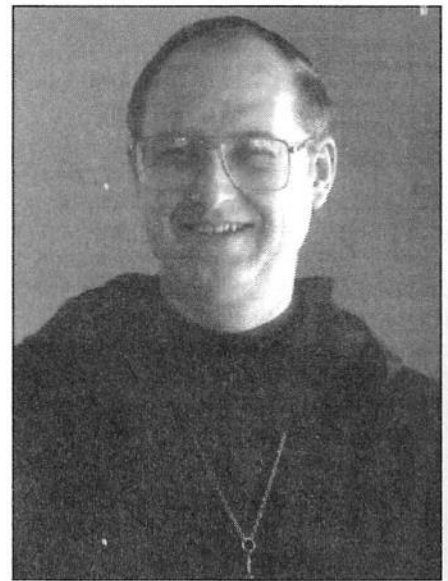
Br. Kurt Van Kuren returned March 29, after taking a personal renewal program in Ontario. Br. Randy Senecal returned April 24 after taking a personal renewal program in Edmonton.

Some community members also celebrate some anniversaries this summer.

Fr. Norbert Schwinghammer will celebrate 70 years of monastic life and Br. Bernard Lange will celebrate 50 years of monastic life.

Fr. Albert Ruetz will celebrate his 50th anniversary of priesthood.

Meanwhile, Fr. Francis Lohmer is our oldest monk at age 96. He made his profession of vows 77 years ago and has been ordained for 74 years. He is still an



active pastor. Something like Wayne Gretzky — he is setting quite a record for anyone to match!

## The Saskatchewan Benedictines



invite you  
to experience

### Monastic Life

by sharing some time with the monks at  
St. Peter's Abbey to assist you in  
discerning your life vocation

Contact:

**Richard Meidl, OSB**

Vocation Director

St. Peter's Abbey

Box 10

Muenster, SK S0K 2Y0

Ph: (306) 682-1777

Fax: (306) 682-1766

## Correction

In our last NEWSLETTER we wrongly guessed that Bishop Pascal's appointment "to the North" was to Isle a la Crosse. This had been the first western missionary station.

However, missionary work ventured farther north to Fort Providence at the west end of Great Slave Lake. This became the seat of the new northern vicariate in 1863. In 1876 Bishop Pascal was sent to assist its new bishop Henri Faraud, OMI.

When Faraud died in 1890 the new vicar apostolic of North Saskatchewan was set up with Prince Albert as its centre and Albert Pascal, OMI, its first bishop. — Ed

**"... that in all  
things God may  
be glorified."**

**— Benedictine Motto**

# Two novices profess their first vows

*On March 22, the Feast of St. Benedict, Brs. Jean-Luc Cotto and Paul Paproski pronounced first vows, declaring their commitment to a way of life that is more than 1,500 years old. The following was put together from information gathered from our new confreres themselves.*

## Br. Jean-Luc Cotto

Br. Jean-Luc Cotto, the only son of eight siblings, was born on Nov. 12, 1948, to Dr. J.J. Cotto-Rincon and Dr. M. Malaret-Marin in New York City. There he attended a parochial school run by the Sisters of Mercy and the Irish Christian Brothers.

"The Sisters and Brothers were so very kind. They nurtured and cared for us constantly. I decided then and there to one day be like them." After completing their specialization, his parents decided to move back to Puerto Rico, where the Cotto-Malaret children began their secondary education.

During this period two of his sisters entered the Franciscan convent and this just finalized his decision to enter a religious order after high school. And this is exactly what he did. At the age of 17 Br. Jean-Luc entered the Alexian Brothers in Chicago.

"They will be forever in my heart. They taught me what it meant to be a good religious and I will be eternally grateful to them." But during these very turbulent days of Vatican II many of the young brothers left and so did he.

"At this stage of my life, I wanted to see the world, make my own way and find out about life." He entered Wichita State University then moved back to New York City, where he completed his BA in English at Hunter College and then received his MA in Vocational Rehabilitation.

Br. Jean-Luc began his professional career as director of education for a state and federally funded substance abuse program. Here, he not only dealt with substance abusers, but also with battered women and children, HIV and AIDS patients, prisoners and the dually diagnosed mentally ill.

"We worked very hard to get elected

officials and funding sources to give these people an opportunity to become educated and productive citizens and we made some progress. But through all this, I knew deep in my heart that God wanted me to go back to religious life, and this is what I eventually wanted to do."

Later on Br. Jean-Luc was recruited to work for the mayor's office and hence began his position in public relations and community affairs. "I felt I could do more for the needy and poor of the city. For now I would have the opportunity to build the shelters and hospices for victims of AIDS and domestic violence and all those that needed the assistance."

"We worked closely with all the boroughs and surrounding community boards, trying to instill in them a sense of empowerment and responsibility to care about our less fortunate. We would ren-

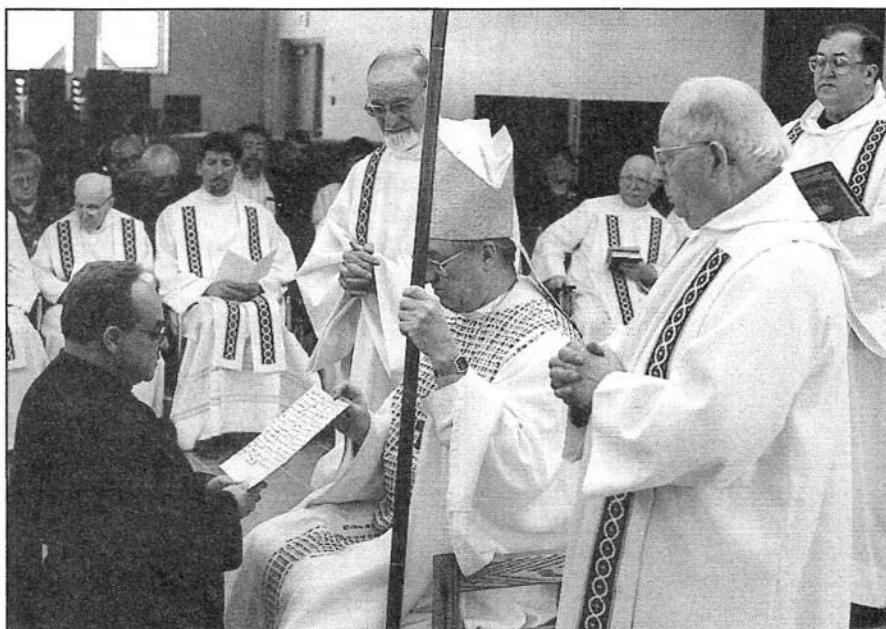
ovate run-down tenement buildings and house those who needed shelter. We developed job referral and placement programs and made sure the right funding went to the social programs that needed it the most. The department became the mayor's conscience, and this was good. All in all a great experience, but very intense."

After many years, many projects and two mayors, Br. Jean-Luc decided to pursue his life-long desire to become a religious. He left New York and moved to Montreal. There he took time for himself and began a fervent quest for a religious order.

An avid lover of French classical art, Br. Jean-Luc was invited to see the new abbey church of Saint Benoit du Lac on the outskirts of the city.

"From the very first moment I entered the monastery and heard their glorious chanting I knew this was what God wanted. I spoke to the prior and he arranged for me to come every month and stay with them. I was assigned a

*Continued, page 4*



*Br. Jean-Luc Cotto reciting his monastic vows, with Frs. James Gray and Roman Schneider as witnesses.*



# Benedictine life draws novices to abbey

*Continued from page 3*

spiritual director and continued to visit the monastery for almost a year, before I decided to apply to the Benedictines. I was then sent to visit the two English-speaking abbeys in the West and this was my first encounter with the monks at St. Peter's." He was accepted as a candidate in September of 1997 and into novitiate six months later.

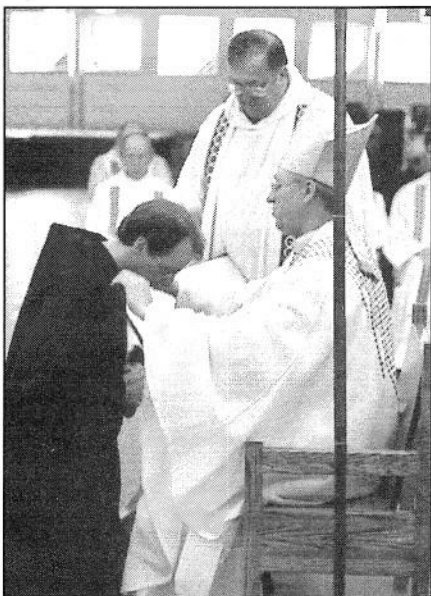
Currently Br. Jean-Luc is working at St. Peter's College and is assisting in the monastery business office.

## Br. Paul Paproski

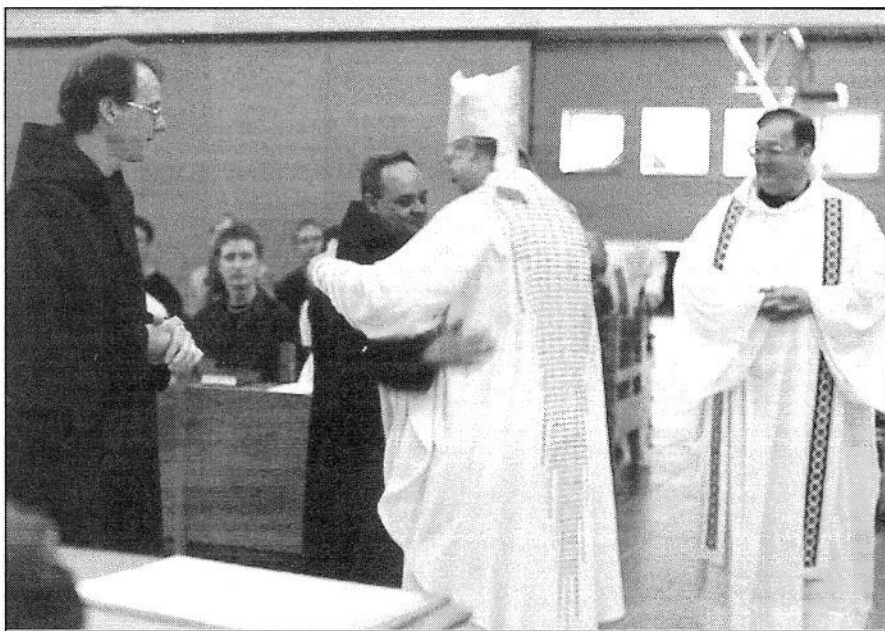
Br. Paul Paproski was born Bruce Ardel Paproski on April 29, 1963, in Lanigan General Hospital. He is the second son of Ardel and Freda Paproski.

When Br. Paul was eight, he moved with his parents, older brother, Perry, and two younger sisters, Gwen and Glenda, to Hudson Bay, Sask., where his mother was employed as a kindergarten teacher and his father as a backhoe operator.

He attended school in Hudson Bay,



*Br. Paul Paproski receiving the monastic hood from Abbot Peter Novecosky.*



*Abbot Peter gives Br. Jean-Luc the kiss of peace.*

graduating from Grade 12 in 1981. The next four years were spent at university where he studied journalism. His first year of pre-journalism (arts and sciences) was spent at St. Peter's College; the second year was spent at the University of Saskatchewan. In 1985, Br. Paul convoked from the University of Regina with a four-year degree in journalism.

From 1985 to 1990 Br. Paul worked at the weekly newspaper in Hudson Bay as a reporter/photographer. From 1990 to 1997 he was employed as the editor of the newspaper.

Br. Paul has always had an interest in spiritual things. While in Hudson Bay he pursued his spiritual interests and became active in his church, serving his church in many capacities.

He taught catechism, read at mass, was a eucharistic minister, choir member and lay presider. He served on a number of committees on parish council, as well as with the Knights of Columbus.

Br. Paul represented his parish on the local ministerial association. He helped spearhead ecumenical singsongs during Christian Unity Week in January. They

are held at the Roman Catholic Church in Hudson Bay each year.

For the past 11 years, Br. Paul has been visiting St. Peter's Abbey. During his visits he became impressed with the solitude and beauty of the place, and the friendliness of the monks. He became interested in Benedictine spirituality.

Having an interest in the religious life and a desire to grow spiritually, he applied to become a candidate at the abbey in April 1997. He joined the abbey in September 1997 as a candidate, and became a novice in March 1998.

During a retreat in May 1998, Br. Paul became impressed with the story of the conversion of the apostle Paul. Because of this he decided to choose Paul for his religious name.

He hopes to one day assist at mass on the organ. He is presently taking organ lessons from Sr. Juliana Weber, OSU.

Br. Paul's family lives in Hudson Bay and includes: parents, Ardel and Freda (Novecosky) Paproski; Perry (Cathy), and children, Cole, Erica and Ty; Gwen (Jeff) Dyck, Joel and Jana; Glenda (Gordie) Smud, Garrett and Ginelle.

# People and events around the abbey

By Martin Brodner, OSB

Jan. 6-11 — Abbot Peter begins this new year by attending a retreat for the Western Conference of Bishops at New Westminster Abbey, Mission, B.C.

Jan. 20 — The Saskatoon diocesan pastors including the Benedictine pastors met in Saskatoon. One of the items was to divide up the diocese into seven deaneries. This was followed by a post-Christmas dinner.

Jan. 25 — Fr. Demetrius, our guest-master, had further surgery on a cancerous growth, similar to surgery on Aug. 13. He has been getting chemotherapy as well. We wish him well.

Jan. 29 — This weekend brought the St. Thomas More students for their annual Newman retreat. It included a good number of former SPC students.

The next two months will be booked quite heavily with various groups, including: Saskatchewan Writers Guild Winter Colony, Lutherans, Anglicans, United Church, Buddhists, SADD, World Wide Marriage Encounter.

Most of these groups make it a point to join the monks in the chanted morning and evening praise.

Feb. 1-9 — Abbot Peter travelled to Dallas and New Orleans. At Dallas 173 bishops from Canada and the Americas met for a workshop on Addiction and Compulsive Behavior. From Feb. 5-9, 60 abbots met at St. Joseph's Abbey, St. Benedict's, La. Fr. Demetrius Dumm, in this workshop, opened up some of the spiritual and mystical aspects of St. John's Gospel.

Feb. 11 — Abbot Peter, Brs. Bernard, Wolfgang and Basil travelled to Kenossee Lake Camp to study their alternative natural heating system from Fr. David Banga, a former student.

Feb. 12 — The Prairie Messenger observed the 95th anniversary of its publication. It held fundraising dinners on this weekend for the Roman and Ukrainian dioceses of Saskatoon, and also the Diocese of Prince Albert.

Pallotine Fr. Erik Riechers was guest speaker at both. This was also the first such dinner in the enlarged diocese of Saskatoon. Fr. Erik spoke on the chal-

lenges facing the church as it enters the new millennium, and his dream of what the church should look like.

Feb. 15 — Informational DEANERY MEETING of the Humboldt area brought together over 125 members from the two dozen parishes, including Bishop James Weisgerber, Vicar General Ron Beechinor and Dorothy Fortier, director, Diocesan Pastoral Office. The bishop outlined the structure of the local deaneries, and the diocesan co-ordination of these deaneries.



*Medieval Feast, Feb. 5 — Fr. Norbert Schwinghammer seen with the Lord and the Lady of the Manor, Jeff Thoms and Julianne Rohel.*

Feb. 16-23 — Our college had its mid-term break from classes. Students rented a bus for a skiing trip to Fortress Mountain, Alta. All returned safely.

Feb. 23-26 — Abbot Peter directed a lenten retreat at Queen's House, Saskatoon. The theme of his retreat was Journeying to the Father's House: a look at how our spirituality is grounded in everyday ordinary events.

Feb. 26 — Lent is here. As one of our lenten projects Abbot Peter is giving the community a series of five talks on the



*Members of the Saskatchewan Writers Guild Winter Colony.*

*Continued, page 6*

# People and events around the abbey

*Continued from page 5*

General Instructions on the Roman Missal. He is still a member of the committee for the revision of our present Sacramentary. They are at present completing the final draft of it.

March 1-3 — Frs. Bernard, Leo, Rudolph and Werner attended the Priests' Study Days for the Diocese of Saskatoon at Waskesiu, Sask.

March 4-9 — Abbot Peter attended the Western Bishops' and Western Religious meetings in Edmonton, Alta.

March 19-21 — Fr. Werner was a member on the team which led the World Wide Marriage Encounter at the abbey. Eight couples attended.

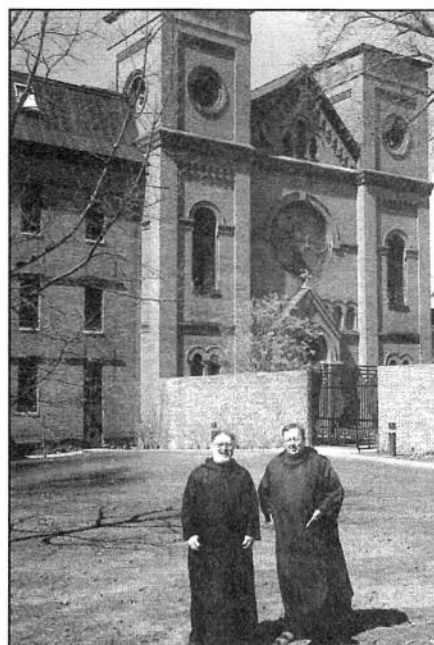
March 22 — Feast of St. Benedict. Novices Jean-Luc Cotto and Paul Paproski, having completed their novitiate, made temporary profession of vows.

March 27 — Oblate Day. On this day Joe Graumans of Prince Albert and Arleen Richardson of Saskatoon were enrolled as candidates for the Oblates of St. Benedict for St. Peter's Abbey. Marian Lalonde of Smoky Lake, Alta., made her Final Oblation.

March 29 — Our Benedictine pastors and the parish representatives travelled to Saskatoon for the Chrism Mass at St. Patrick's Church. The Chrism Mass will no longer be celebrated in our St. Peter's Cathedral since our inclusion in the enlarged Saskatoon Diocese.

March 31 — What can we say of our weather? It has been a rather mild winter with the exception of two weeks of severe cold in mid-January. Our snowfall has been rather light. However, it was sufficient for the spring run-off to fill our reservoir with precious water.

April 4-13 — Fr. Richard and Br. Thomas drove down to St. John's



*Fr. Richard Meidl and Br. Thomas Ward outside "The Great Hall" at St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn.*

Abbey, Collegeville, Minn., to take part in the Benedictine Formation Directors Workshop. On the way down they stopped at St. Benedict's Monastery,

*Continued, page 7*



*Oblate Day. (L-R) Arleen Richardson of Saskatoon, Fr. Albert Ruetz, Joe Graumans of Prince Albert, Abbot Peter Novecosky and Marian Lalonde of Smoky Lake, Alta.*



*Fr. Mark Stengel of Subiaco Abbey, Ark., and Br. Thomas Ward, former confreres of Santa Familia Monastery, Belize, meeting at St. John's Abbey.*



# People and events around the abbey



*Assumption Abbey, Richardton, N.D.*

## *Continued from page 6*

Winnipeg, Man. Coming home they called at Assumption Abbey, Richardton, N.D., and spent a day visiting with the monks there.

April 7 — The Sisters of St. Elizabeth made a decision to transfer ownership of St. Elizabeth Hospital to the Saskatchewan Bishops Catholic Hospital Corporation. The OSEs opened the hospital the week after they arrived in the Colony (May 14, 1911), and have served the people of the abbacy most faithfully.

April 12 — The newly formed St. Peter's Deanery held its first regular meeting at the Resource Centre, Muenster, to choose its executive. The chairperson will represent our deanery at the annual Saskatoon Diocesan Deanery meetings. This deanery includes all the parishes of our former abbacy plus a few more to the south. Fr. Daniel Muyres was elected priests' representative.

April 13 — Abbacy CWL celebrated a "farewell" eucharist at St. Augustine Church, Humboldt, and a banquet at the Legion Hall. It will now be reorganized with the Saskatoon diocesan CWL.

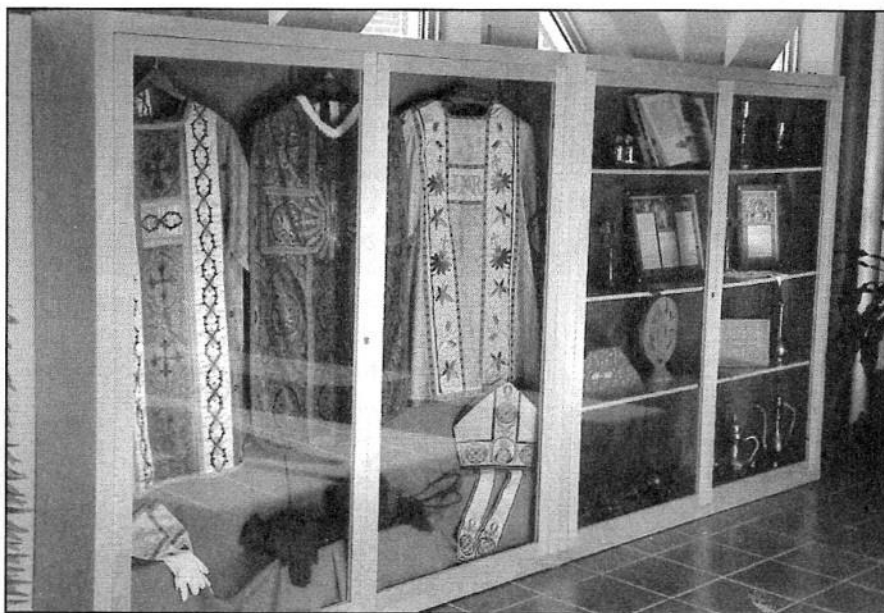
April 14 — Visitors to the abbey were Abbot Leander Dosch, OCSO, and Bishop Noel Delaquis, former bishop of Gravelbourg. Since that diocese disappeared with the recent diocesan boundary changes, the bishop said that he can now be called "titular bishop of Gravelbourg" rather than bishop emeritus.

April 15-22 — Abbot Peter conducted the retreat for the Oblates of Mary Immaculate at Queen's House Retreat and Renewal Centre.

April 16-18 — We had a full house of 14 couples for our Engaged Encounter. Fr. Demetrius, guestmaster, joined the lead team, replacing Fr. Leo Hinz who had co-ordinated the E.E. for many years. Thank You!

April 23 — Another college year ended with the completion of the final university exams.

April 28 — Fr. Lawrence DeMong returned to the abbey after his one-year's assignment to the Brazil mission.



*The new display cabinet in the north passageway near the church.*

# Deaths

Since the last newsletter the following have passed into eternity:

**Jan. 8** — Br. Ignatius Bachovchin, OSB, 80, Holy Trinity Monastery, Butler, Penn.

**Feb. 5** — Br. Walter Landwehr, OSB, 85, St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, Kan.

**Feb. 13** — Fr. Mark Mages, OSB, 86, St. Bernard Abbey, Cullman, Ala.

**Feb. 15** — Fr. Arnold Fox, OSB, 95, St. Martin's Abbey, Lacey, Wash.

**Feb. 18** — Br. Phillip Kress, OSB, 81, Assumption Abbey, Richardton, N.D.

**Feb. 24** — Fr. Thomas Rabideau, OSB, 82, St. Gregory's Abbey, Shawnee, Okla.

**March 2** — Wilfred Hinz, brother to Fr. Leo Hinz.

**March 9** — Fr. Hilary Heim, OSB, 75, St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, Kan.

**March 14** — Br. Paul Marconyak, OSB, 87, St. Andrew Abbey, Cleveland, Ohio.

**March 28** — Fr. Jordan Stovik, OSB, 84, St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn.

**April 1** — Fr. Richard Wilhelmi, OSB, 69, Assumption Abbey, Richardton, N.D.

**April 8** — Fr. Wilfred Fangman, OSB, 75, St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, Kan.

**April 10** — Oblate Maria Reinelt, 94, Humboldt, Sask.

Published and printed by the Benedictine community of St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Saskatchewan S0K 2Y0, three times per year: January - May - September.

Editor: Thomas Ward, OSB.

Regular contributors: Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB, Martin Brodner, OSB.

Photo Credits: Moran, Ward, Cotto, Stengel.

Logo by Kurt Van Kuren, OSB.

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

# Monk and student release CD

When he entered St. Peter's Abbey 17 years ago, Br. Kurt Van Kuren, OSB, began developing an idea. He wanted to put together an album of traditional Gregorian chant arranged for two electric guitars.

That dream became reality when Br. Kurt and 16-year-old guitarist Janice Weber, grand-niece of Fr. Jerome Weber, released *Sacred Electric*, a collection of eight Gregorian chants, in February 1999.

"Those who are familiar with original Gregorian chants will enjoy hearing these melodies in a context which is at once fresh while still successful in pre-

serving the integrity of the original melodies. *Sacred Electric* is also a fine entry point for those who are not familiar with the traditional melodies but who are fans of blues, alternative rock and guitar music in general," said Andrew Thompson, a jazz guitarist who reviewed the album for the *Prairie Messenger*.

The CD is available for \$15 at Buy the Book at St. Peter's College, St. Peter's Press, Scott & Weber Law Office in Humboldt, Sam the Record Man and Gotta Hava Java in Saskatoon, or by calling 306-682-5652. Visit the Web site at [www.3.sk.sympatico.ca/sain/chant](http://www.3.sk.sympatico.ca/sain/chant)



Br. Kurt Van Kuren and Janice Weber practice selections from their CD, *Sacred Electric*.

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

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