

ST. PETER'S ABBEY NEWSLETTER

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March, 1977



HISTORIC BISHOPS' MEETING. Standing, left to right: Bishops Laurent Morin, Prince Albert; James Mahoney, Saskatoon; H. V. R. Short, Prince Albert; Andrew Roborecki, Saskatoon; Noel Delaquis, Gravelbourg; D. A. Ford, Saskatoon. Seated, Archbishop Charles Halpin, Regina; Abbot Jerome Weber, OSB, Muenster; and Archbishop G. F. C. Jackson, Regina.

Abbey hosts historic meeting of bishops

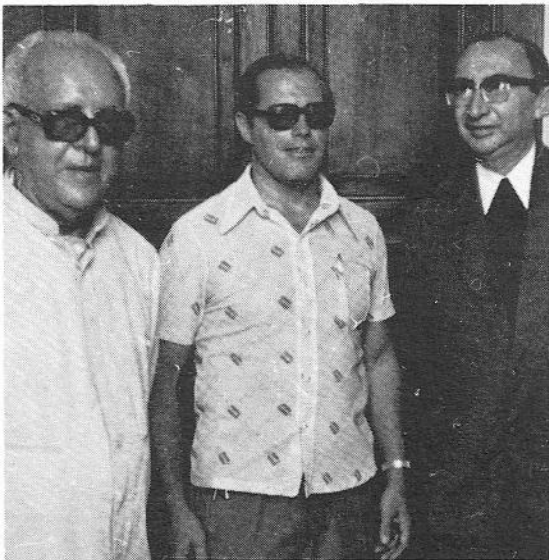
The monastic community of St. Peter's Abbey was privileged on March 10 to be able to host an historic first meeting between the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Ukrainian Catholic hierarchy of Saskatchewan. The meeting between the Catholic and Anglican bishops of Saskatchewan followed upon similar meetings in Alberta and Ontario within the past year.

The purpose of the meeting at the abbey was for the bishops to become acquainted and to share common pastoral concerns. During the meeting, each of the bishops (and the abbot, as ordinary of St. Peter's Abbey Nullius) described the extent of his diocese, the pastoral work being done in it and its organizational structure.

The bishops shared the noon meal and recreation with the monks and ended their meeting by praying Vespers with the community.

The next meeting between the bishops is scheduled for Sept. 20 at Saskatoon. At that meeting they will discuss the statement on the eucharist prepared by the international Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission of Theologians.

Participating in the meeting were: Archbishop G. F. C. Jackson of Regina, Anglican metropolitan of Rupertsland and archbishop of Qu'Appelle; Bishop H. V. R. Short of Prince Albert, Anglican bishop of Saskatchewan; Bishop D. A. Ford, Anglican bishop of Saskatoon; Bishop Andrew Roborecki, Saskatoon, of the Ukrainian Catholic eparchy of Saskatchewan; and, of the Roman Catholic dioceses of the province, Archbishop Charles Halpin, Regina; Bishop Laurent Morin, Prince Albert; Bishop James Mahoney, Saskatoon; Bishop Noel Delaquis, Gravelbourg; and Abbot Jerome Weber, OSB, of St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster.



Dom Adelmo Machado, Father Sylvester Vredegoor and Dom Miguel Camara celebrate the 10th anniversary of the abbacy team working in Brasil. Dom Adelmo, retired archbishop of Maceio, met Abbot Jerome Weber at Vatican Council II and invited him to send missionaries to his diocese.

10 years in Brasil

Father Sylvester Vredegoor celebrated his 10th anniversary as a missionary in Brasil this January. Father Sylvester left Canada, alone with Father Alvin Hergott, on Jan. 6, 1967. They were installed as pastors of the parish of Sao Jose (St. Joseph) in Maceio, Brasil, on Jan. 27, 1967.

To celebrate this anniversary, a special "festa dos Canadenses" was celebrated in Maceio this year on Jan. 30. Dom Miguel Camara, archbishop of Maceio, arranged the celebration to express his gratitude to the Canadians working in his diocese. This includes not only the St. Peter's Abbey team but also the members of the Saskatoon team who have been working in Uniao dos Palmares, just outside of Maceio, for 12 years.

Members of the abbacy team at the celebration were: Father Sylvester and Father Bernard Stauber, and Sisters Imelda (Maria) Doecker, OSU, and Claire Novacosky, OSU. (The two Elizabethan members of the team, Sisters Dolores Janzen and Sida Hrbachek, are taking a year of theology studies at Newman College, Edmonton this year.) The two Saskatoon missionaries, Fathers Don Macgillivray and Emil April, were also honored at the celebration.

At a concelebrated Mass in the Maceio cathedral, packed with people, Dom Miguel publicly expressed his gratitude to the Canadians for leaving everything, their friends and their home, to come to Brasil. He stressed the idea of co-responsibility in the church, that all Christians are responsible for their brothers and sisters in Christ everywhere. The Mass was followed by a reception for clergy, Religious and prominent lay people. It was celebrated in the style of true Brazilian hospitality, warm with friendship and courtesy, under a moonlit sky.

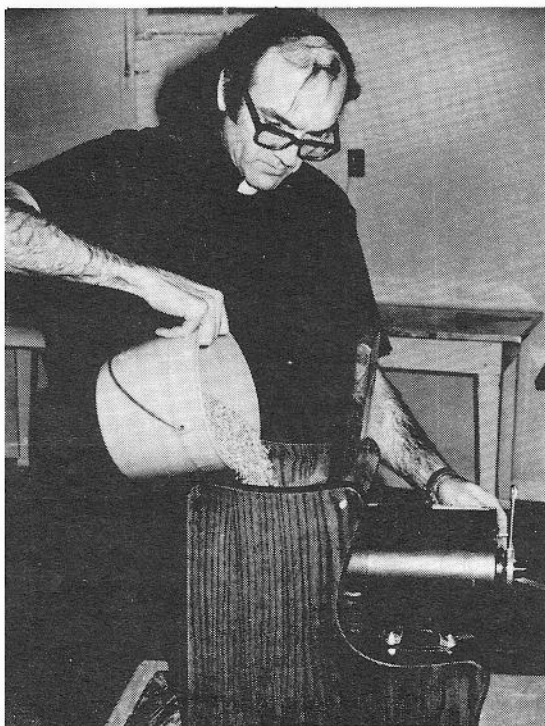
A special touch was added to the celebration by the presence of two Canadian visitors, Sister Maureen Maier, OSU, of Bruno and Bishop James Mahoney of Saskatoon. They were both visiting in Brasil at the time. Both Sister Maureen and Bishop Mahoney delighted the Brazilians by saying a few words in Portuguese.

While Father Sylvester has been in Brasil for 10 years, other community members have been there for shorter periods of time. Alvin Hergott returned

to Canada in July of 1968. Father Leander Dosch worked in Brasil from January, 1968 to May, 1971. Father Bernard Stauber has been working in Brasil since January, 1973.

(A special mission bulletin commemorating the 10th anniversary of the abbacy's mission in Brasil will be published next month.)

In addition to the monks who have worked in Brasil, several community members have visited the team there. Abbot Jerome Weber, along with Sisters Jerome Pulvermacher, OSU, and Florianne Kohlman, OSE, made an initial visit to Brasil in 1965. Abbot Jerome visited there again in May of 1969. In August of 1971 Fathers James Gray and Maurice Weber spent over two weeks visiting the team. In June of 1974, Father Rudolph Novecosky, along with Abbot Jerome, spent two weeks in Brasil. From April to June of 1975 Father Andrew Britz combined a visit of 10 weeks with some scriptural classes for the team. Abbot Jerome visited the team again in the summer of 1976.



A popular item on the monastic and guest table at the abbey is the recently introduced home-milled bread. Early this year Father Lawrence DeMong began to grind abbey wheat every week for good-tasting, whole-wheat bread. Sister Valerie Scheiber, OSE, baker, arranges the finished loaves on a cart.

Abbey Nullius document

On Dec. 29, 1976 Pope Paul VI issued a document which will have an effect on the future of St. Peter's Abbey, though at present it is not clear how soon and what changes will take place.

The apostolic letter, or *motu proprio*, concerns the reorganization of Abbeys "Nullius Dioeceseos" (of no diocese). An abbey nullius is a sort of mini-diocese with the abbot of a monastery as its head. The abbot of St. Peter's is the head of St. Peter's Abbey Nullius, the only one of its kind in North America and one of about 20 throughout the world.

St. Peter's Abbey Nullius was established by Pope Benedict XV on May 6, 1921, 18 years after the community moved to Muenster and 10 years after the community became an abbey. Abbot Michael Ott was installed as the first abbot-ordinary by Archbishop Olivier Elzear Mathieu of Regina on Sept. 8, 1921 at St. Peter's Cathedral, Muenster. Abbot Michael was followed as abbot-ordinary by Abbot Severin Gertken and Abbot Jerome Weber.

St. Peter's Abbey Nullius is about 1,800 square miles in area, and at present it has about 13,000 Catholics. The 25 parish churches are served regularly by 21 priests, all of whom are Benedictine monks belonging to St. Peter's Abbey.

In his apostolic letter, Pope Paul said the basic reason for reorganizing abbeys nullius is that "the Catholic church . . . will render a more effective service to men to the degree that she will more carefully reform her own structures . . ."

In this particular case, the two structures to be reformed according to the documents of Vatican Council II, the Pope says, are the institutions of monasticism and the local diocese.

Vatican Council II, the Pope said, asked monks to keep intact "the nature of their own institutions" and to "renew their ancient sound traditions and adapt them to the present-day needs of souls . . ." The council also asked religious communities that intimately unite apostolic life with choral office and monastic observances to "harmonize their own lifestyle with the demands of an apostolate suitable to them."

In his letter the Pope also said that "it is necessary that the diocese . . . should clearly manifest the nature of the church . . ." He was referring to the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church which refers to the church's episcopal



Rollie Engele (left), Carmel, brother of Father Alfred, helps Brother Oswald King "recycle" some single beds into double bunks. Rollie has volunteered many hours of work at the abbey this winter.

nature: "The individual bishop is the visible principle and foundation of unity in his particular church."

Of the four new canons in the papal letter governing abbeys nullius, three are applicable to St. Peter's Abbey Nullius. First, "the abbeys nullius which exist at present should be more suitably defined territorially or turned into other ecclesiastical circumscriptions according to the rules set down by the Second Vatican Council."

Another canon says: "An abbey nullius, whose territory has been completely turned into another circumscription, will be restored to the status of common law or will be ruled by particular law . . ."

The final norm prohibits an abbot-ordinary from being ordained a bishop, except in special circumstances.

It is not yet clear how and when the new norms will be applied to St. Peter's Abbey Nullius. In any case, the norms do not affect St. Peter's as an abbey. The abbey has existed and will continue to exist whatever happens to the abbey nullius. And no doubt, as in other North American abbeys, some priest-monks will continue to be needed to serve as pastors in the parishes of the area.

Studying in Rome

Father Maurice Weber, studying at Sant' Anselmo, Rome, this year, gives us a report of some of his educational ventures.

Four of us, myself and three monks from the United States, went into the old fort at Siracusa, Sicily; we noticed the graffiti on the walls. People had scratched their names with the dates. I saw some dating back to before nineteen hundred, some as recent as 1976. This could be seen in Saskatchewan, except for the signatures from before 1900. At home, that would be old; here, it is so recent.



Father Maurice

That is one of the impressions that keeps hitting me. How much life and history have passed over these lands. In Rome we pass by walls and buildings that are 2,000 years old. We see the forum, coliseum, the old city walls, the catacombs, churches, the pantheon, and many monuments that stretch back to before 500 AD. One gets used to such things before long, and it is only when a person reads about events connected with such places that vivid visions of bygone days rise up in one's imagination.

I have now seen Greek temples dating back 25,000 years, at Segesta, Seleneunte, Agrigento and Siracusa. Some of them are in remarkably good condition. Sicily is a gold mine of artifacts from the past.

What never fails to impress me is the amount of dedication and labor the people of two millenium ago put forth to construct the Greek temples. We saw a quarry where they cut pillar blocks out of solid stone. The sections were perfectly round and must have been seven or eight feet in diameter. It must have been a gruelling business without modern machines and tools. After the stones were cut the ancients then dragged them several miles to the site of the temples. And these monstrous stones then had to be lifted into place and ground smooth so that they fit with perfection.

I had always thought that they simply used slave labor to do such exhausting work, but after speaking with someone who had seen the even more ambitious projects of the Egyptians, it was made clear that these people of old simply considered it as part of their life's work to build

monuments to the gods. In great part then, they might be considered labors of love.

Religion was something very important for the ancient Hellenists of Sicily. It was an integral part of the life of the Romans as well. The Romans seem less ambitious for the gods and more along the lines of our practical mentality. In the excavated city of Pompei we see their less imposing temples, but they had fine public buildings.

Then in the 15th and 16th centuries, Florence and Venice were riding high on the waves of prosperity. This was also a time of great religious ferment. The rich and powerful had worldly dreams, but they sunk much of their wealth into building and beautifying the churches of God. The Duomo in Firenze (Florence) completed in 1478 is one example while the Sistine Chapel and St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome are another.

In this age again, much effort went into beautifying the temples. This is the great age of religious art, and the themes in the majority of cases are drawn from living faith. Lives were spent in doing something well for the inspiration of man and the glory of God. There were many who were willing to sink their money into projects which would not have a capital return for themselves. They had different ideas of what is important compared to the notions so prevalent in our world today.



Brother Francis Fortney (second from left), along with Leo Torborg, an abbey employee (to his left), took part in a farm electrical course in St. Gregor, Feb. 14-17.



Trucks have to wait their turn to fill up from the abbey water supply. Sometimes there were six trucks lined up and some drivers had to wait up to three hours.

Dissa 'n datta

This winter has been a busy one for people hauling water from the abbey dugout. Neighboring farmers and town people have been using the excellent-quality abbey water to fill their cisterns and water their cattle. Over 1.5 million gallons have been hauled out since fall, reports Brother Gregory Brodner. In the past year, a total of over five million gallons has been used from the 14-million-gallon-capacity dugout. Of this amount 3.75 million has been processed through the abbey filtering system and about 1.5 million gallons have been used, unfiltered, by the farm. Because of the lack of snow this winter, there has been no run-off to refill the dugout, but the supply remaining should last another year.

In mid-March the abbey kitchen began serving fresh, home-grown lettuce, thanks to Brother Wolfgang Thiem. He planted lettuce and tomatoes in the abbey greenhouse on Feb. 2. We hope the tomatoes will be on the table before long, too!

On March 15 about 80 grade 12 students from

schools in the surrounding area toured St. Peter's College. They got a look at the university program during an information day organized by Father Andrew Britz.

At the beginning of March Ted Wood from Yorkton began work in the abbey and college library. It will take him several months to compile a working list of periodicals to which the library formerly subscribed. He has worked with the university library and the Provincial Archives office in Saskatoon, and recently he researched a history book for the RCMP. He is living at the abbey while he works here.

Pat Weber also became a resident at the abbey recently. He had been living with his mother, Mrs. Cecilia Weber. When she moved into St. Mary's Villa, Humboldt recently, Pat came to the abbey on March 19. He will stay at least a year and is helping Brother Thomas Gerwing in the guest department.

In the first three months of this year, 217 people have toured the St. Peter's Abbey museum, Brother Jude Marco reports. Last year a total of 3,559 visitors signed the museum guest register.

Dates to circle

April 29-30: A live-in at the abbey for men who want to experience monastic life.

May 8-15: Directed retreat for eight monks, given by Father Angus Macdougall, SJ, executive director of the Ontario Conference of Bishops and former rector of Campion College, Regina.

June 13-17: Abbot Jerome Weber and Brother Bede Hubbard will attend the general chapter of the American Casinese Federation at St. Procopius Abbey, Lisle, Illinois.

June 17: Father Joseph Ackerman will celebrate his 25th anniversary of monastic profession.

July 11: Father Matthew Michel will celebrate his 60th anniversary of monastic profession.

July 18-22: Father Michael Prieur of St. Peter's Seminary, London, Ont., will conduct this year's study week on moral theology.

Sept. 14-25: Abbot Jerome Weber will attend the congress of Benedictine abbots and priors at Sant' Anselmo, Rome.

Nov. 4-6: Father Frank McNulty of Immaculate Conception Seminary, Darlington, Mahwah, N.J., will be the main speaker at this year's Christian Faith Conference.

Deceased brethren and relatives

Father Justin McKernan, 79, Holy Cross Abbey, died on Jan. 1.

Father Wendelin Henry Luetmer, 89, St. John's Abbey, died on Jan. 5.

Father Edward (Joseph) Wenstrup, 82, St. Vincent Archabbey, died on Jan. 17.

Father Rembert Charles Bularzik, 94, St. John's Abbey, died on Jan. 21.

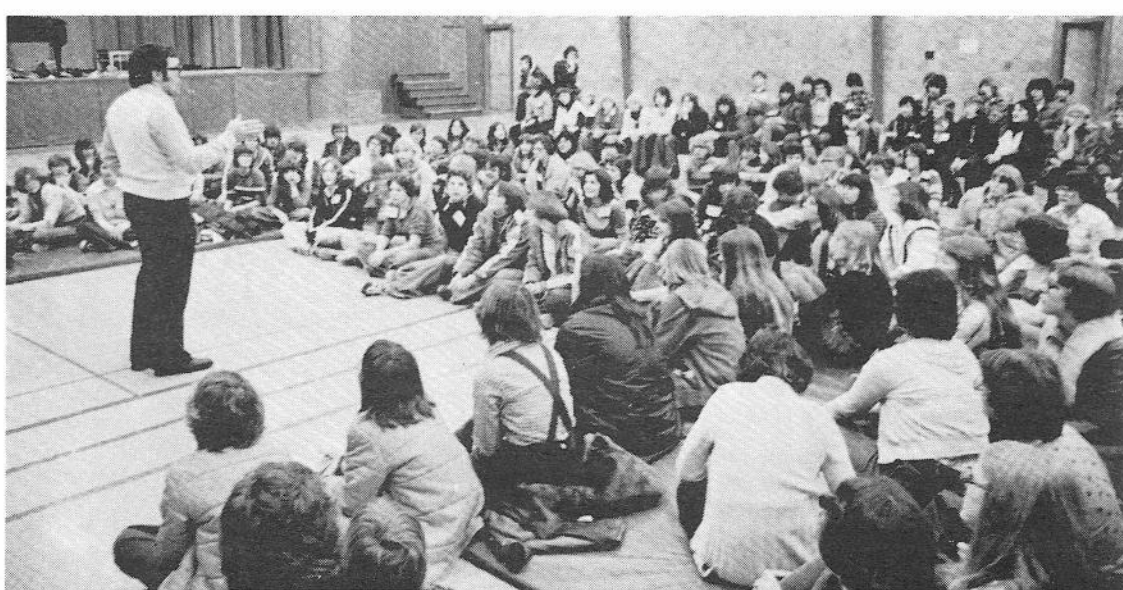
Father Adrian (George) Mundt, 58, Assumption Abbey, died suddenly on Jan. 31.

Father Jerome Lorraine Toner, 78, St. Martin's Abbey, died Feb. 23.

Bernard Lange, 74, father of Brother Bernard, died suddenly and peacefully at his home in Anaheim on March 16.



Father Philip Loehr, pastor of Carmel, gets ready to get into his 1969 Renault. On Feb. 28 he and the car completed their 250,000th mile! Affectionately calling his car "The Frenchman", Father Philip swears to the car's reliability and low gas consumption (50 miles per gallon). The front-wheel-drive car has served Father Philip for trips throughout Saskatchewan and across Canada.



Father John Boutin of Carrot River spoke to almost 200 young people at a youth conference held at the abbey Feb. 26. The theme of the conference was Joy of Life.

Personnel notes

Abbot Jerome Weber attended the meeting of the Western Conference of Bishops in Victoria, March 1-3. He will also attend the meeting of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in Ottawa, April 13-15. One of the principal topics for both meetings, since the setting up of the regional conferences in Canada, is the goals and aims of the national body. Abbot Jerome will also be celebrating the sacrament of confirmation at various parishes in the abbey nullius this spring: at Watson and Pilger on May 15; at Bruno on May 22; and at Lake Lenore and Humboldt on May 29.

Father Daniel Muyres, along with Fathers Werner Renneberg, Andrew Britz and Peter Novocosky, attended the 10th annual meeting of the Western Conference of Priests in Winnipeg, Feb. 14-17. On March 28-29, Father Daniel attended the WCP executive meeting in Lumsden to help plan next year's conference in Regina.

Father Gregory Gasser courageously continues his fight against cancer, which is developing virulently. He went to St. Elizabeth Hospital on Feb. 1. He was able to return home to the abbey in good spirits on March 2. But after a week, he again had

to return to the hospital on March 9, where his condition continues to fluctuate.

Brother Dominic Distel spent a happy six weeks in Germany visiting his two brothers and some old friends and school mates at Hochemmingen in the Black Forest, West Germany. He left St. Peter's by train on Jan. 15 and visited a former student, Francis Kan, at Saint John, N.B. Brother Dominic arrived back at the abbey on March 5.

Father Martin Brodner recently made his debut as a leader for Marriage Encounter. He was on the team that led the second Marriage Encounter held at the abbey, March 25-27.

The Canadian Consultative Commission on Multi-culturalism has been quite active recently. As a member of this committee, Father Florian Renneberg attended meetings in Edmonton, Jan. 29-30, in Montreal, Feb. 26-27, and in Toronto, March 11-13.

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics sponsored the Western Canadian Leadership Conference in Edmonton on Feb. 5. Two representatives from each of the four western provinces were invited to attend, and Father Albert Ruetz

was one of the representatives for the Saskatchewan Mathematics Teachers.

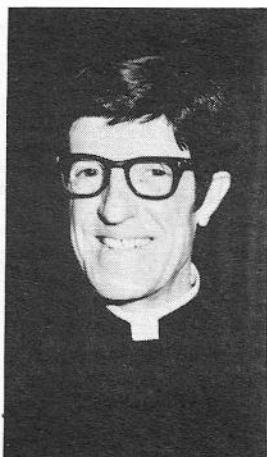
Father Leo Hinz also made his debut this spring in helping to conduct a Marriage Encounter weekend. He teamed up with Vincent and Ruth Morrison to lead an encounter at Lumsden, Feb. 11-13. Father Leo was also able to spend a bit of time at the abbey while he was helping with the general chapter of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth, Humboldt, as the canonical consultant, Feb. 19-March 3.

Father Lawrence DeMong went to the National Office of Religious Education, Ottawa, Feb. 23-March 9, to help the team which is revising the grade 5 program of the Canadian Catechism.

Brother Bede Hubbard went to the Mennonite College at Rosthern, Jan. 13-14, to speak to the high school students about monastic life and to compare the Anabaptist and Roman Catholic traditions.

Brother Peter Dougan left Jan. 2 for a semester of theology studies at Newman College, Edmonton.

He visited the abbey during a school break, Feb. 17-23.



Two speakers at the abbey recently were Fathers Joseph Bisztyo, Saskatoon (left), and David Sheldon, Paynesville, Minn. Father Bisztyo began a series of talks on the eucharist on Feb. 3. Father Sheldon gave a stewardship day of recollection on March 15.



Father Leo Hinz was canonical consultant for the general chapter of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth, Humboldt.



Father Norbert Schwinghammer is a regular visitor with Father Gregory Gasser at St. Elizabeth Hospital, Humboldt.

Brother Thomas' guestmaster's diary

As I am writing this report (Sunday, March 27), the second Marriage Encounter held at St. Peter's Abbey begins its final session, and the spring Marriage Preparation Course begins its first session. Both have full houses. It would appear marriage is not only alive, but robust. This Marriage Encounter and one held in January of this year were given enthusiastic votes of confidence by the participating couples. I hope these encounters will become a regular feature of Severin Hall activities.

Joe Bernard of Ohio and/or Banff dropped in for the New Year's day weekend. His visit was as colorful as his August visit in 1976.

one-day retreat here in early January, followed the next weekend by an Anglican confirmation class of 60, most of them from Saskatoon.

The Saskatchewan department of agriculture conducted two week-long rural counselling courses at St. Peter's, one in January and the other in February. In fact agriculture was well represented these past weeks as St. Peter's also hosted a three-week hog management course. Some of the participants lived in at Severin Hall and rapidly became "part of the family".

St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon, held a retreat here the last weekend of January, under the leadership of Father Brian Hogan, CSB. Father Hogan will be away studying next year. We'll miss his friendly visits to St. Peter's.

The Earthcare people, always most welcome, returned for a conference in early February. Their

Twenty highschoolers from Humboldt held a

presence at the abbey is always an occasion for the monks to review and renew their commitment to simple living.

The Anglican ordinary of Saskatoon, Bishop D. A. Ford, with 30 of his clergy, made a retreat at the abbey from Feb. 15-17. He returned three weeks later with his fellow Anglican bishops of Saskatchewan for an informal meeting with the Catholic hierarchy of Saskatchewan, both of the Roman and Ukrainian rites. On that occasion the bishops concluded their visit by celebrating Vespers with the monastic community.

The directors of Don Bosco youth camp held a meeting here Feb. 12. The instructors of St. Peter's Orchestra (artists-in-residence with the Saskatoon symphony) were here March 3 and 4.

In the December issue of the abbey newsletter, I had noted how much we enjoyed the visits of Mennonite guests. We had two such treats in March: a retreat-cum-council meeting of the Nutana Park Mennonite church, Saskatoon; and a look at monasticism by 40 students of the Mennonite Bible College in Swift Current. Father Andrew Britz gave the students talks on monasticism, and they celebrated Vespers and Saturday evening Vigil service with the community. Following this, pianist Greg Schulte, who is living at the abbey this winter, gave the students a lecture-recital in the gym. This was prolonged an additional hour by an enthusiastic group of his audience.

The Saskatchewan Physical Education Association held its annual conference here March 9-11. The conference theme was outdoor winter activities, rather difficult to carry through with the snow gone and the ice going.

Fifty local teachers and catechists held a mini-retreat here March 14.

In addition to groups, we have frequent individual visitors, many of them for retreats, others for quiet, reflection and study. Leo Fournier of Prince Albert spent a happy two weeks in this way recently, sharing his enthusiasms with us. Celine Wolsfeld of Cudworth spent a week; Bishop Noel Delaquis of Gravelbourg and Father Ian Boyd, CSB, of St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon, were among our recent visitors.



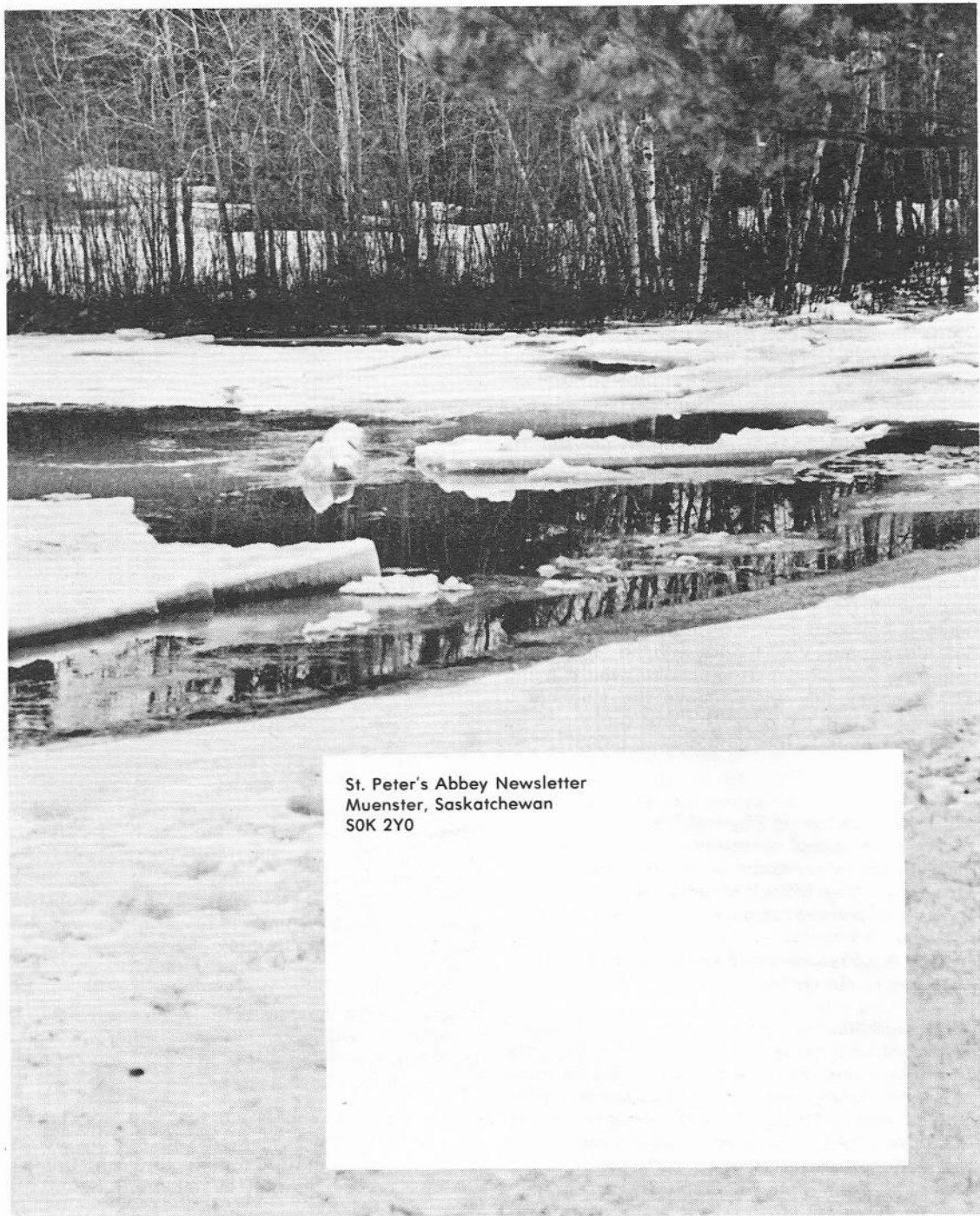
Peter J. Hartung, former printer for St. Peter's Bote.

Bote printer dies

St. Peter's Abbey recently received word from Latrobe, Pennsylvania, of the death of Peter J. Hartung, 94. Mr. Hartung, a printer from Darmstadt, Germany, emigrated to Canada in 1911. He worked on the St. Peter's Bote, published here at the abbey, until 1924. At St. Peter's the Hartungs joined the Catholic church.

From St. Peter's, the Hartungs moved to St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, a mother abbey of St. Peter's. Mr. Hartung worked at his printer's trade there for 50 more years until he retired in 1973 at age 90!

Mr. Hartung's son, Bruno, has sent St. Peter's a box of his father's memorabilia for the abbey archives, including a commentary on Dante's Divine Comedy, written by Mr. Hartung in his Muenster days.



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Muenster, Saskatchewan
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