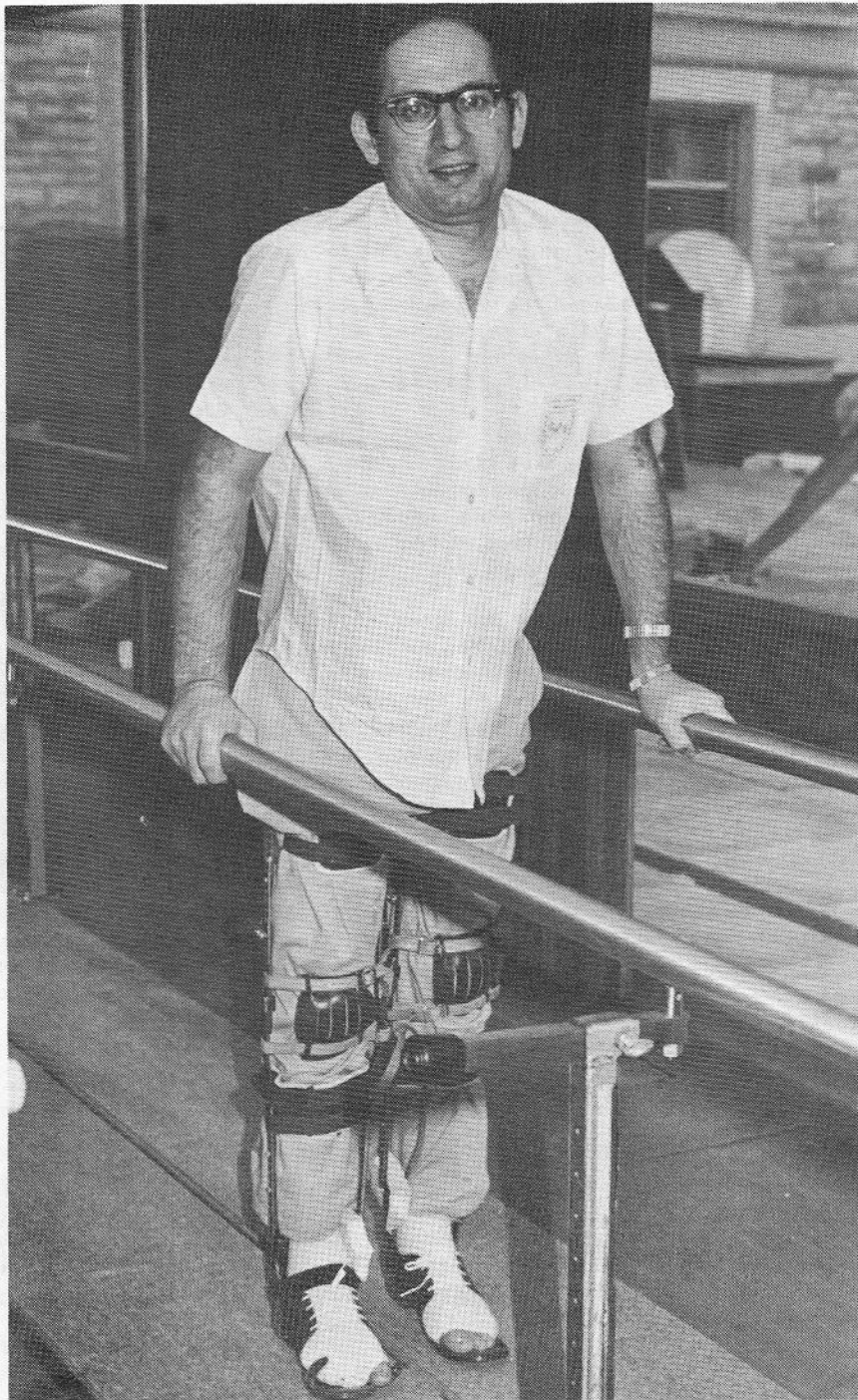


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ST. PETER'S ABBEY NEWSLETTER



The road to recovery

Prior Rudolph Novecosky has been making rapid progress at the University Hospital, Saskatoon, recovering from the hunting accident he had Nov. 3, 1977.

For the past two months he has been having twice-daily, hour-long physiotherapy sessions, to exercise his muscles and regain his overall strength. By the end of March, he was walking by himself, aided by parallel bars or crutches, and with his legs in braces. He hopes that soon he will be walking, with only the aid of leg braces.

Since the beginning of February, he has been using a wheelchair. This makes him completely independent, and he is able to take care of himself in the hospital. It also gives him more mobility, so he can leave the hospital to attend movies in the evenings, and come home for weekends.

Father Rudolph made his first trip home to the abbey the weekend of Feb. 10-12. He returned in time to take in that evening's performance of H.M.S. Pinafore by the St. Peter's Community Players. He enjoyed it so much he returned the next evening for the second performance. In this way he was also able to meet many friends and parishioners, many of whom he hadn't seen for the three months he had been in the hospital.

During the weekend, he also preached the homily at the Sunday Eucharist, the first Sunday of Lent. In his homily he reflected on his experiences in the hospital.

He has since visited the abbey on several other weekends, including Easter, as well as spending a weekend at the home of his parents. During April he hopes to come home for weekends regularly.

Father Rudolph is still suffering from nerve

COVER

Since mid-March part of Prior Rudolph Novecosky's daily, two-hour physiotherapy session includes walking, with leg braces, between parallel bars. He hopes to be walking independently soon, using only leg braces.



Working with these muscle builders, Father Rudolph strengthens his arms. Other exercises to build up his muscles include: pulling weights on pulleys, walking on all fours, and lifting his legs with weights on them.

spasms in his feet. These are quite painful and have increased since he began to walk with braces.

However, the wound in his lower back is completely healed and is no longer painful. He has feelings in his legs up to his feet. He has no feelings in either foot, however. Providentially, the shotgun pellets that hit him in his back did no damage to his internal organs.

Father Rudolph hopes that by the end of April he will be able to return to the abbey to continue his recovery at home.

Around the abbey

A time of excitement at the abbey each spring is the annual run-off. This year there was more than usual interest because of the concern about getting enough water to refill the abbey reservoir.

Since the 15-million-gallon reservoir was first filled in the spring of 1971, the supply has been more than adequate to supply for the yearly needs of the abbey as well as those of the neighboring farmers and villagers who have come to the abbey for their water supply.

However, last spring there was no run-off due to the light snowfall. So the water supply was conserved last summer and fall to ensure an adequate supply through the winter. It would not have been sufficient for another year.



Brother Wolfgang Thiem gives the tomatoes in the greenhouse daily attention.



By mid-winter, it seemed there would be no run-off problem this spring as lots of snow fell. This picture changed, however, when the severe winds in early February swept most of the snow cover off the fields.

As the weather turned warm during the last part of March, the monks watched the run-off situation closely. By March 29 enough water had accumulated from the melting snow to begin running into the reservoir. By the beginning of April the water level had been raised by more than five and a half feet, and the community, especially Brother Gregory Brodner, was able to breathe more easily again.

In other matters, the university professors at St. Peter's College were finishing up classes to bring the 52nd year of university classes to a completion by April 5. Ads and brochures are being prepared to attract students from the area for next year. The secretarial course taught here will be completed at the end of May, and the Special Education classes will continue until the end of June.

During Holy week, many of the monks were busy with Easter services in the surrounding parishes. In the weeks preceding that, the pastors, with the help of monks from the abbey, had full schedules to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation in the various parishes and schools.

On March 10 the community chapter discussed a request from the Archdiocese of Regina that the pastor of Watson take pastoral charge of the parish of Quill Lake, 12 miles to the east. The community agreed to accept responsibility for the parish for three years.

On Feb. 3 the community chapter met to discuss the implications for the abbey of the new federal taxation law. The new ruling will affect the press and farm in particular, since non-community

members are employed in these enterprises. The community decided to set up separate companies for the farm and press; these companies will be one-shareholder companies, and that shareholder will be the Order of St. Benedict.

In the first week of February Brother Wolfgang Thiem planted tomatoes in the greenhouse. He had started them in his room in the abbey on Jan. 7. By the end of March tomatoes had already set onto the plants.

The flu bug hit a number of monks this spring, but it hit hardest on Feb. 6 when about half the community seemed to be suffering from it.

On March 17 the senior council decided to purchase a new electronic organ for the abbey chapel.

On Feb. 23 the college personnel organized a high school student visiting day. Over 100 students from the area came here to get a first-hand look at the university and secretarial-class facilities, meet the faculty, and have coffee and doughnuts with various members of the community.



St. Catherine church, Quill Lake.



Joe McSheffery, Lawrence Genoio and George Hunt began their postulancy program at St. Peter's at the end of January.

New postulants

On Jan. 26 three monastic candidates began a postulancy program at the abbey under the direction of Father Peter Novocosky.

The candidates are Lawrence Genoio of Toronto, George Hunt of Corner Brook, Nfld., and Joe McSheffery of Bath, N.B.

The postulancy program will last six months, until the beginning of novitiate on Aug. 5. During the program, the postulants work, pray and live with the monks, to give them a better idea of monastic life as well as to give the community an opportunity to get to know them better.

Each morning the postulants have a class. Various members of the community are helping give classes, including Fathers Peter Novocosky, Daniel Muyres, and Andrew Britz, and Brothers Bede Hubbard and Stanley Vindevoghel. They are working in various areas at the abbey, including the press, farm and renovating the chapel.

Looking ahead to next year, two young men have already applied for the postulancy program to begin next January and several others have expressed interest in coming here.

Dates to circle

April 23-29 and May 14-20: Spring live-ins at the abbey for men who want to experience monastic life.

June 7: Father James Gray will celebrate his 25th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood.

June 25-29: Abbot Joseph Gerry, abbot of St. Anselm's Abbey, Manchester, N.H., will preach the annual monastic retreat.

June 29: Fathers Aloysius Herriges and Xavier Benning will celebrate their 50th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood.

July 9-23: 75th birthday celebrations of St. Peter's Colony.

August 31: RCMP Musical Ride.

November 3-5: Father Armand Nigro, SJ, of Gonzaga University, Spokane, Wash., will be the main speaker at this year's Christian Faith Conference.

Chapel renovation

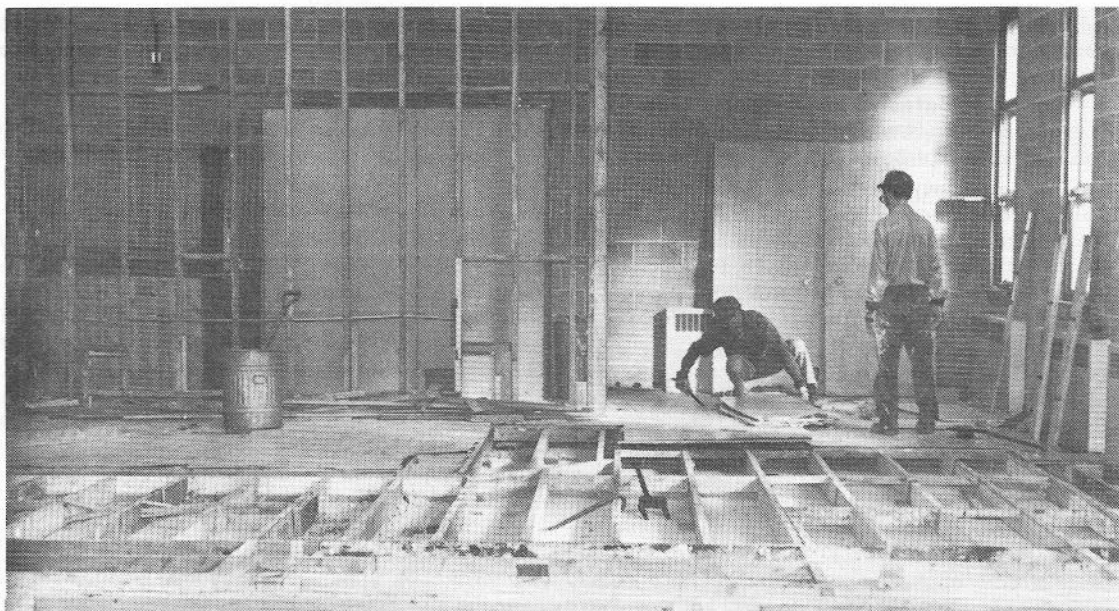
At the Feb. 3 meeting of the monastic chapter, the plan for renovating the chapel presented by the Abbey Chapel Renovations Committee was discussed and accepted by the community.

The new chapel plan relocates the principal's and secretary's office into a combination office area at the west end of the chapel wing. The chapel floor-plan itself is reversed so that the altar will be at the west end and the entrance doors at the east end. Other features of the renovated chapel include a Blessed Sacrament chapel, a reconciliation room, two sacristies, and a lift to transfer wheelchairs or carts from the chapel level to the monastic corridor level.

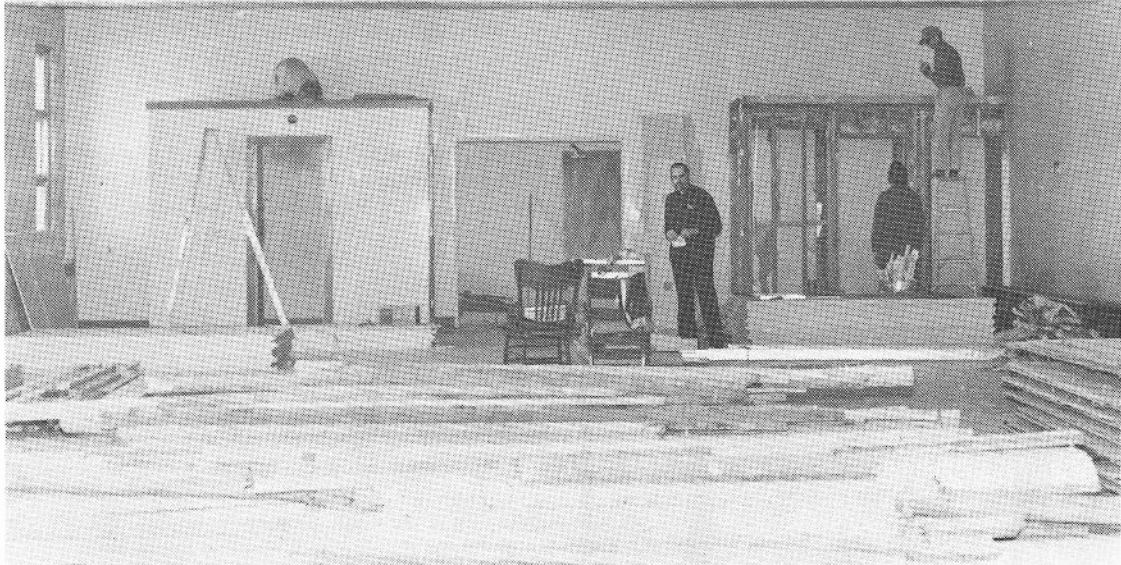
The renovation work was begun on Feb. 27, and is expected to be completed around the middle of May. Meanwhile, a temporary chapel is arranged in the monastic dining room, and the monks transferred temporarily to their old monastic dining room in Michael Hall for their meals.



Brother Wolfgang Thiem was in charge of putting on the plaster board.



Brother Francis Fortney and George Hunt remove the old sacristy and the platform under the altar area.



Father Leo Hinz checks the progress of the chapel renovations while (from left) Carl Perreca, Father Andrew Britz and Brother Francis Fortney remove the old confessionals.



Brother Peter Dougan and Leo Torborg look toward the semi-completed reconciliation room.



Father James Gray sang the Easter Exsultet on Holy Saturday at St. Peter's Cathedral. Community members who did not help out in other parishes participated in the Holy Week services at the cathedral, where Abbot Jerome Weber was main celebrant.

Personnel notes

Abbot Jerome Weber attended the meeting of the Saskatchewan bishops in Saskatoon, March 15. He will be busy soon celebrating the sacrament of confirmation in various parishes in the abbacy: May 7, Annaheim and Humboldt; May 14, Lake Lenore; May 28, Fulda, Bruno and Cudworth; June 4, St. Gregor and Englefeld; and June 11, Muenster. Abbot Jerome, as well as *Father Albert Ruetz*, have directed a number of individual retreatants at the abbey this spring.

Fathers Daniel Muyres, Philip Loehr and Peter Novocosky attended the annual Western Conference of Priests meeting in Regina, Jan. 30-Feb. 2. Father Daniel, with *Father Leo Hinz*, organized the abbacy marriage preparation course this year. Other monks helping included *Fathers Florian* and

Werner Renneberg, Father Lawrence DeMong and Brother Thomas Gerwing.

Father Alphonse Ludwig was laid up with a sore leg a couple of weeks in January and needed assistance for services at Naicam on a number of Sundays.

Father George Brodner required assistance for several Sundays at Annaheim while he recuperated from his Jan. 9 gall stone operation.

Father Martin Brodner was on the team that presented two abbacy marriage encounters, in January and in March.

Father Florian Renneberg was the main speaker at the Jan. 29 ecumenical service in Humboldt during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

On Feb. 27, *Brother Conrad Abs* brought to the abbey the annual picture-chronicle album he compiles at the press during his spare time.

Father Roman Schneider fell and injured his back, March 17, while taking Communion to a sick parishioner at Bruno. Though it slowed him down for a couple of weeks, he is now back to normal.

Father Andrew Britz spoke at an ecumenical service in Regina, Jan. 24, during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Since the beginning of January, he has also been making trips to Saskatoon twice a week to teach the second semester course on Biblical Literature at STM, University of Saskatchewan.

Brother Bede Hubbard spoke on the role of the Catholic press at the weekend Masses at Holy Spirit parish, Saskatoon, Jan. 28-29.

Brother Thomas Gerwing gave the main talk at the celebration at STM, Saskatoon, Feb. 4-5, marking the 500th anniversary of St. Thomas More's birth. On April 1 Brother Thomas resigned from his teaching position at Muenster school, completing 36 years of teaching.

Sister Charlotte Vogel, a hermitess at St. Peter's Abbey since July 1972, left on Jan. 10 to experiment with a still more secluded anchoritic life in a cell provided by the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Regina.

Brother Thomas' guestmaster's diary

For readers who may not know, the official name of the guest wing is Severin Hall, named for Abbot Severin Gertken, third abbot of St. Peter's.

So then — Severin Hall activities started early in the new year with 40 Anglican youth coming for a weekend retreat. One feature we've noticed about Anglican youth retreats is the large number of ministers and other resource persons, giving them a ratio to retreatants of approximately 1:4.

Campus Ministry personnel from the University of Saskatchewan met here Jan. 13-14.

From Jan. 16-20 and Jan. 30-Feb. 3, the Saskatchewan Dept. of Agriculture held its concluding sessions of a series of counselling courses for provincial ag. rep's.

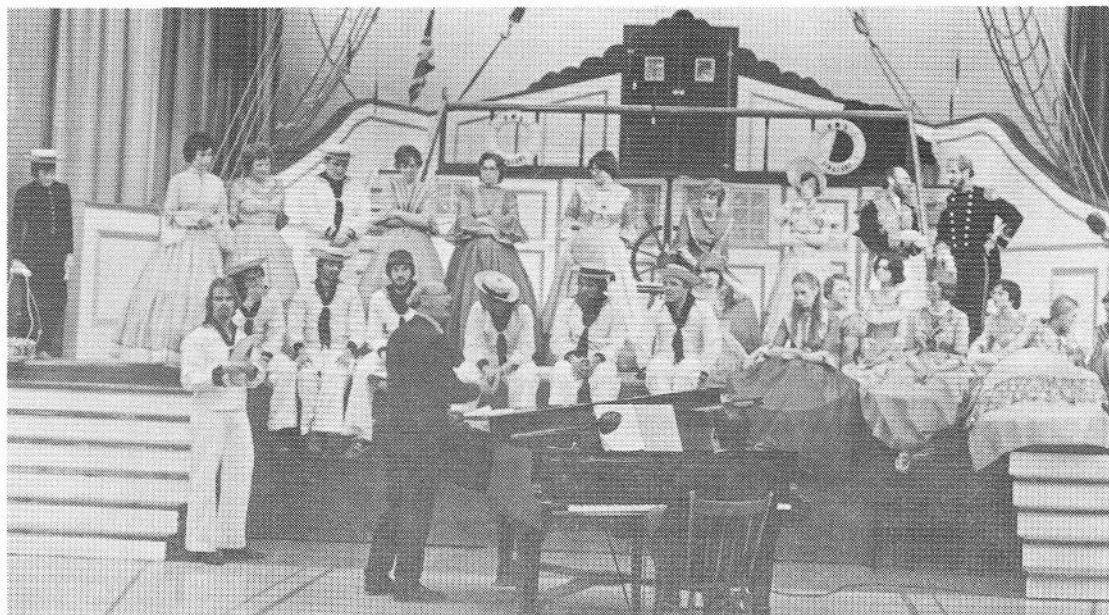
Severin Hall has hosted two abbacy marriage encounters since Christmas: one in January and one in March. The World Wide Marriage Encounter group, too, met here on March 10-12, hosted by

Leroy and Carol DeMong of Battleford. Both these groups do fine work "making good marriages better".

Jan. 22-28 we hosted 19 major superiors of women Religious. It was a week of "top brass" — and most enjoyable. The Sisters were pleased with their week-long session.

In early February, some members of the cast of H.M.S. Pinafore stayed several nights in Severin Hall. They were university students in the main, and proved that at least some students still know how to work. The Dan Beveridges of Regina, the Gerry Farthings of Swift Current, and a psychiatrist of Spanish origin and his family, also of Swift Current, spent the weekend of Feb. 11-12 visiting here and attending the operetta.

Twenty-four theology students of Emmanuel-St. Chad made a three-day retreat in mid-February followed by a Newman Club-S.T.M. retreat.



Brother Thomas Gerwing gives a few pointers to the St. Peter's Community Players after a dress rehearsal of H.M.S. Pinafore. The operetta was performed Feb. 10, 11 and 12. At the piano is accompanist, Greg Schulte.



Several monks at the abbey have joined other men in the area to give some "visibility" to this year's 75th jubilee celebration of the founding of St. Peter's Colony. From the left: Father Peter Novecosky, Brothers Peter Dougan and Stanley Vindevoghel, Fathers Lawrence DeMong and Leo Hinz, Brother Francis Fortney, and Lawrence Genois.

Ken Fawcett, son of SPC alumnus Leslie Fawcett, arranged for a weekend conference of 100 teachers, government workers, and others interested in ecology and outdoor living, Feb. 24-26. We're always happy to host environment groups.

On Holy Thursday a three-week hog management course held at St. Peter's ended. Some of the participants from far away "lived in" in the guest wing. After three weeks they become almost part of the family.

Thirty officials of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Ass'n. and of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation met at St. Peter's Feb. 17-18 to talk over mutual concerns such as the problem of falling enrolments and teacher cut-backs.

March generally and Holy Week in particular are favorite times for individuals to come on retreat. We've had Sister Clair Gauthier, Celine Wolsfeld and Carl Perrica in late lent; Sister Gauthier came Palm Sunday; Wayne Pelttari, guidance counsellor at Cardinal Newman High School in Montreal, came Tuesday of Holy Week;

two more Sisters on Holy Thursday, four people on Good Friday including alumnus Dennis Gruending, free-lance journalist and broadcaster in Regina. Then on Easter Sunday, 10 Sisters arrived for retreat! I suppose if this kind of activity (individuals and small groups coming for periods of recollection) grows, we will cut back on the number of conferences and workshops we host.

Deceased brethren

Father Virgil Rudolph Stallbaumer, 79, Newark Abbey, Newark, N.J., died on Dec. 12, 1977.

Father Matthias Auer, 87, St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Penn., died on Jan. 9.

Brother Oblate Jud Francis, 67, St. Leo Abbey, Saint Leo, Florida, died on Feb. 13.

Father Otho Leo Sullivan, 75, St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, Kan., died March 2 after suffering a stroke. Father Otho served as visiting professor at St. Peter's College from 1939-1941.

Father Gervase (Alexander) Chutis, 74, St. Vincent Archabbey, died on March 29.

Letter from Rome

This summer Father Maurice Weber completes two years of study of monastic spirituality in Rome. He plans to return to St. Peter's in July. In the following letter he shares some of his reflections about Italy.

On March 16 a group of students enrolled in the monastic spirituality course in Sant' Anselmo, the Benedictine college in Rome, went for a journey and hike. Our group consisted of seven Sisters and eight priests, all Benedictines or Cistercians.

We took a bus to a 13th century Cistercian monastery of Casamari, where we celebrated Mass in the beautiful, ancient church, looked around the grounds and buildings, and then, before leaving, bought a few bottles of Gran Liquore Casamari.

Hereafter we hiked some eight miles to the town of Veroli where we visited the Benedictine nuns. They served us a very fine dinner of the usual Italian pasta followed by other typical dishes.

We took a bus back to Rome. It was a surprise to have our bus stopped by police who checked the occupants of the vehicle. I thought that they might be after an escaped convict.

Since the space between bus seats always seems too short for my legs I had chosen the back seat to stretch out. Meanwhile the other 14 of our group, including people from France, United States, Tanzania, Yugoslavia, Mexico, Brasil, Germany, Portugal, Korea, and Canada, were sitting up ahead. I was reminded of the fact that in Italy, and particularly Rome, one meets people of varied nationality. Nor are they all Catholic. I myself was sitting between two dark skinned young men who appeared to speak some Arabic tongue. They were very talkative, though they had not gotten on at the same town, and I felt better when we shifted positions so they would not have to talk over me.

It was of interest for me to find out shortly after arriving here that Italy sticks out like a semi-land bridge or sore thumb, depending on what expression you prefer, toward Africa and the Middle East from Europe. As a result we find many northern Africans from various countries in Italy. There are also many Greeks plus Lebanese, Iranians, Yugoslavians and so forth.

I mention this because back in Canada we sometimes think that the Italians, or the Vatican for that matter, is not aware of what is going on in the world. However, Italy is quite a crossroads for people of many lands.



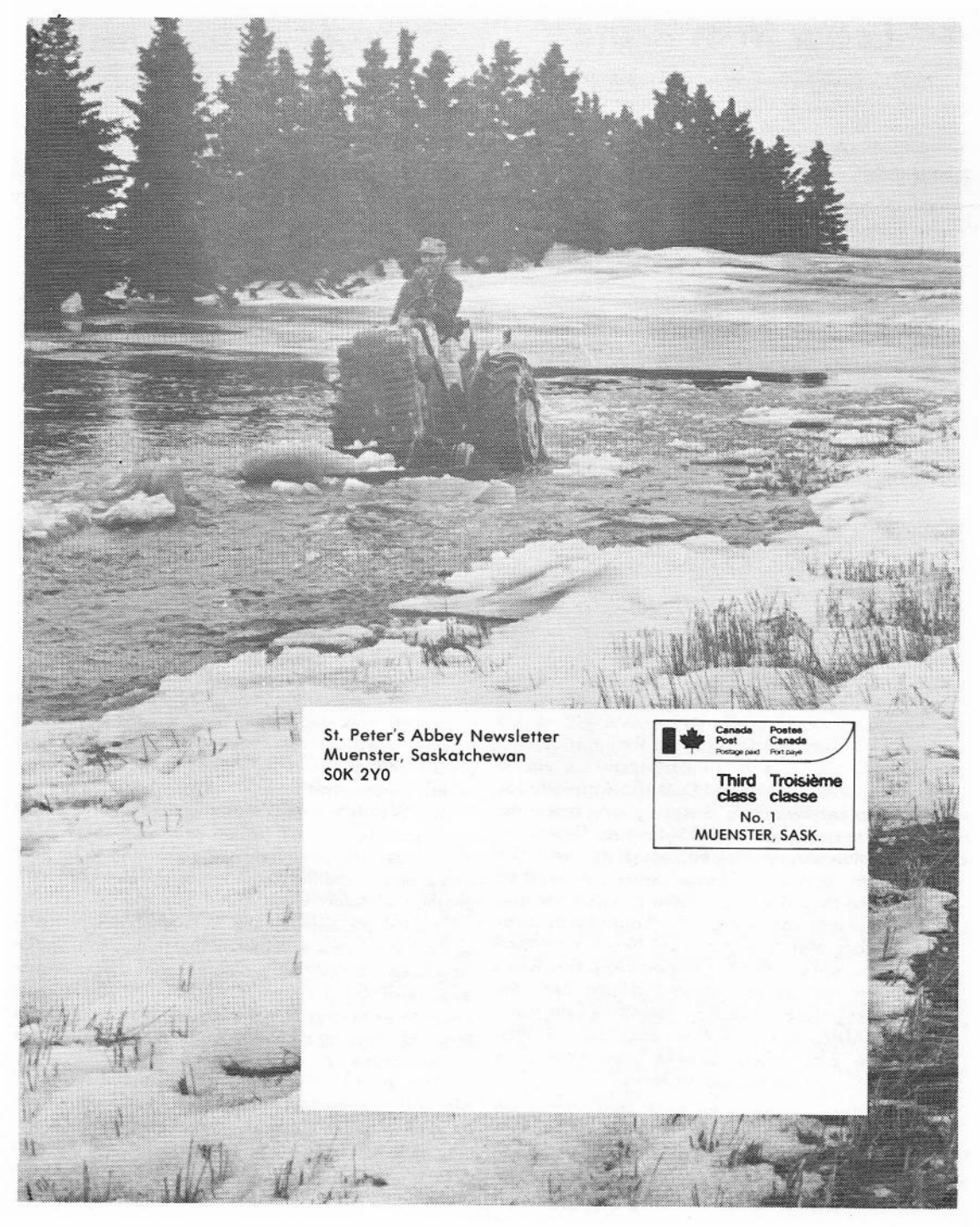
Father Maurice Weber in Rome.

To get back to my return journey, we arrived in Rome about 9 pm. This night Rome seemed to be extraordinarily quiet and deserted. Again, we had to stop for police inspection of the vehicle and occupants. I noticed that at least a dozen police and military were at the checkpoint with automatic pistols held at the ready. What is all this security about, I wondered?

It was only the next morning that I learned that on March 16, former Italian prime minister Aldo Moro was kidnapped by people claiming to be part of a group called the Red Brigade. All five of Moro's protective escort were killed in a hail of bullets.

As I think back to the events of March 16 it brings home to me some of the things that make Italy such a delightful, yet sometimes disgusting or even fearful, place. This is one country where most seem to go to church, not necessarily to pray, but at least to look at the paintings or sculptures or architecture or antiquity.

The people have such a different view of alcoholic drinks and other goods of life compared to our Protestant-tinged history. The people cannot get into our efficiency pattern (Italians always seem to us to talk too much and visit too long), but this makes them more personable and human.



St. Peter's Abbey Newsletter
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