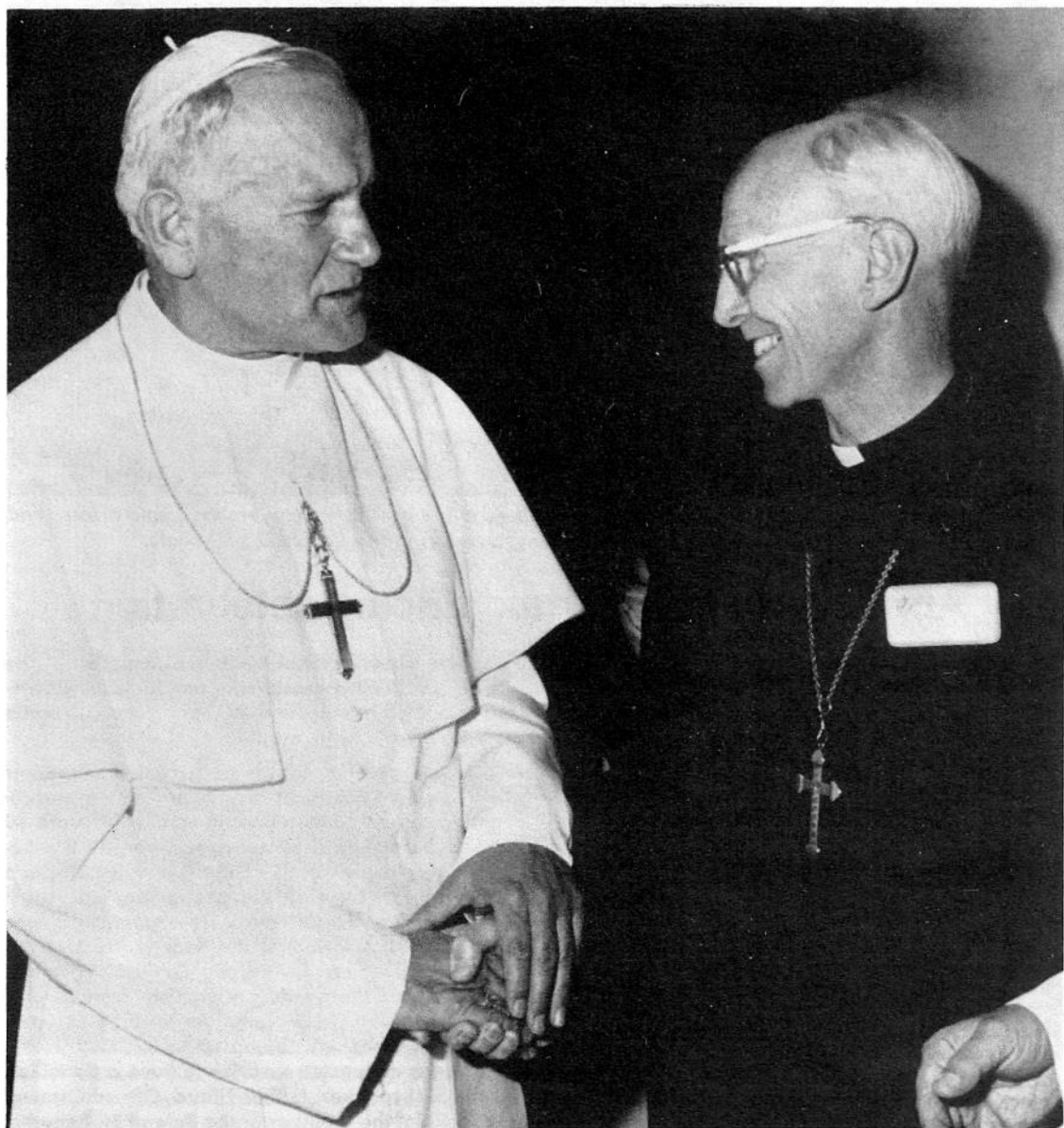


ST. PETER'S ABBEY NEWSLETTER

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Abbot Jerome Weber, front row, second from left, poses with other Benedictine abbots and priors (and prioresses who were observers) in front of Sant' Anselmo during the Congress of Abbots.

Abbot Jerome reports on Rome celebration

Since 1980 is the 1500th anniversary of the birth of St. Benedict and St. Scholastica, it was fitting that there be expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving to God wherever men and women today still follow the Rule of Benedict and wherever the influence of his rule has been felt in years gone by, as in Europe. What we did at St. Peter's has already been reported in our summer edition of the newsletter.

The central and most important celebration of the Sesquimillennium took place in Rome. During September, 1980 Cistercian (OC) and Trappist men (OCSO) held their general chapters there. There, too, Sept. 22-29, the Benedictine men of the world (OSB), made up of 17 congregations and the others

united by observance of the Rule of Benedict — the Olivetans, Vallumbrosians, Camaldolese, Silvestrians and eight independent monasteries — had a Congress of Abbots and Priors.

Those present for these meetings, together with about 50 Benedictine nuns and sisters, representing some 35,000 men and women in some 40 countries, met in a symposium, Sept. 17-21. Besides these there were 12 Benedictine bishops, and invited guests from different religions, e.g. Anglican, Lutheran and Orthodox. The symposium was held in the auditorium of the headquarters of the Augustinians near St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Simultaneous translations in English, French, German and Italian made it possible for all present to understand what was being said.

It was a pleasant surprise to have a Canadian as the first speaker, Father Tillard, OP., of Ottawa. He spoke of the theology of the Rule of St. Benedict

COVER

Pope John Paul II shakes hands with Abbot Jerome Weber at Monte Cassino on Sept. 20.

from the point of view of one who does not follow it. From his talk, however, it was easy for me to see how thoroughly he had studied its contents. He spoke of Christ as the Teacher who reveals the will of the Father and leads us to him, of listening to the word of God with a great love for him speaking, of the obedience of faith which follows from this and goes beyond the physical and the psychological, of being before God in silence and prayer which lead to adoration and contemplation.

Archbishop Rembert Weakland, OSB, a former abbot of St. Vincent's, then abbot primate in Rome (1967), and since 1977 archbishop of Milwaukee, spoke of the relations of the monastery and the local church. He pointed out that the monastery must truly be what it was meant to be — a little church — living by faith and pointing to a life for God, and living a life of renunciation in a consumer society.

The final speaker was Mrs. Hanna-Renate Laurien, a minister of state in West Germany. She presented a good analysis of Western society and suggested how the followers of St. Benedict could make a contribution, e.g. by a strong faith in God in a society in which the search for God is hardly evident publicly, by community prayer, by a renewed understanding of work as a service to our brothers

and sisters, rather than looking upon work as a burden to be endured.

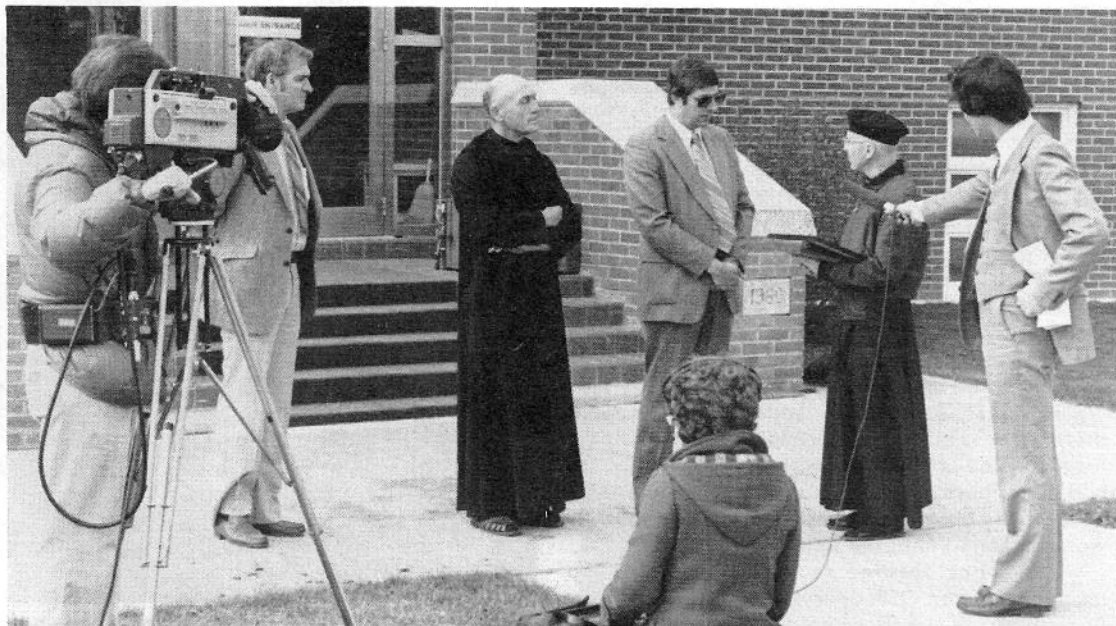
The high point for all participants in the symposium (about 450) occurred on Sept. 20 at Monte Cassino (a two-hour drive from Rome). On that mountain St. Benedict built a monastery, there he wrote his Rule and there are venerated the remains of St. Benedict and St. Scholastica under the main altar of the church.

At 11:30 a.m., Pope John Paul II celebrated Mass and the abbots and priors concelebrated. He gave the homily in Latin — all the Mass was in Latin — and Gregorian chant was used for the sung parts. He strongly encouraged all the followers of the Rule to be seekers of God and spoke of the need for silence and prayer.

The festive meal was eaten in a huge refectory. Shortly after 4 p.m., Pope John Paul personally shook hands with each one present in the long large hallway.

Monte Cassino was bombed during World War II and totally destroyed. Later, however, it was rebuilt; during Vatican Council II, in 1964, Pope Paul VI consecrated the church and at the same time declared St. Benedict patron of Europe.

On Sept. 21 the symposium ended with an open discussion on the role of monastic life in the



A CBC-TV crew from Saskatoon came to film the presentation of a plaque to Abbot Jerome Weber and a book to Brother Oswald King to mark 75 years of weather observation at St. Peter's.

world today and of its growing influence in Africa and Asia.

The Congress of Abbots began next day at Collegio Sant' Anselmo. It was build in the mid 1890s by Pope Leo XIII as a place where Benedictines from various countries of the world could live while they studied in Rome or at Sant' Anselmo where philosophy, theology and liturgy are taught.

A congress of Benedictine abbots and priors is held usually every four years to discuss various matters of common concern. This year we spoke about Sant' Anselmo, e.g. of the difficulty of obtaining professors and enough students for the school from Benedictine monasteries and of the finances, because the rate of inflation in Italy is very high. We were informed of the very satisfactory work of the liturgical institute. The laws governing the confederation were revised and brought up to date.

Such a congress is also an opportunity to pray the Divine Office together: Lauds, Terce, None and Vespers. This was done in Latin since it is the one language common to all, at least to some extent. The daily Mass was concelebrated in the Church of St. Sabina, headquarters of the Dominicans, about a five-minute walk. The church at Sant' Anselmo was used for the meetings of the congress, since it was the only space there large enough to accommodate all the participants, about 220.

The opening Mass of the symposium, however, was at St. Paul's Basilica, attached to a Benedictine monastery, and the place where Pope John XXIII announced the summoning of Vatican Council II. Cardinal Pironio, of Argentine, the person in charge of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, was the principal concelebrant and the homilist.

A journey to Subiaco had been planned for Sept. 28. It was there that St. Benedict went after he left Rome as a young man "desiring to serve God alone." There he began his life as a monk, in prayer and solitude, in a cave, for three years. Then he opted for community life in a monastery.

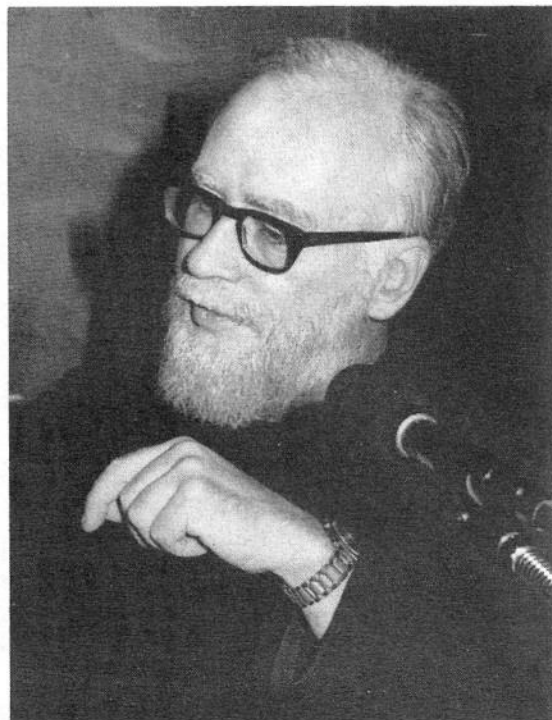
However, on that day Pope John Paul went there with the bishops of Europe who were in Rome for the Synod of Bishops treating of the family. He had gone there to pray for the intercession of St. Benedict as patron of Europe. Hence our journey was postponed until the following day.

We concelebrated Mass with Archbishop Augustine Maier, OSB, a former abbot of Metten in Bavaria (from which came the first Benedictine monks in the United States). He spoke briefly in four languages and in the German language en-

couraged the abbots to be true fathers to the members of their communities. Mass was in the monastery of St. Scholastica. Later we went higher up the mountain to the smaller monastery built over the cave in which St. Benedict lived for three years.

There was one interesting sidelight which I would like to mention. While in Rome, a combination of circumstances made it possible to be with Bishop Mahoney of Saskatoon, who had come there to attend a meeting of the International Committee for English in the Liturgy (ICEL), and with Archbishop Dom Miguel of Maceio (where our mission team is), who had come to Rome for his periodic visit with the pope. The three of us met at the Brazilian College for a meal, and Father Don Macgillivray, who had come along with Dom Miguel, was the interpreter.

It was a privilege to be present at these celebrations and meetings. I was again impressed very much by the great variety in the expression of the Benedictine way of life, but also by the unity of spirit which was so evident also.



Father Hugh Tasch, OSB, of Conception Abbey gave a workshop on *lectio divina* and prayer, Aug. 18-22.



The Canadian Bishops Art Collection was on display in the gym during the workshop on *lectio divina* in August.

Personnel notes

Abbot Jerome Weber attended the Sept. 17-21 symposium in Rome in honor of St. Benedict's 1,500th anniversary as well as the Congress of Abbots, Sept. 22-29. He travelled to Winnipeg Nov. 12 to take part in Cardinal G. Flahiff's 50th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood and to take part in the annual meeting of the Canadian Bishops Liturgy Commission, of which he is a member. At the beginning of Advent he resumed his weekly conferences for the community on the Rule of St. Benedict.

Prior Albert Ruetz conducted a renewal day for the secular oblates living in Saskatoon on Nov. 21.

Brother Gregory Brodner went to the hospital in Humboldt for a check-up Oct. 13 and spent several days there after he suffered a dizzy spell.

Father George Brodner was named administrator of St. George's Parish, Naicam, at the beginning of October. Father Damian Yaskowich is his Sunday assistant. Father Alphonse Ludwig continues to live at Naicam and celebrates Mass daily in the rectory.

Father Martin Brodner attended the Western Liturgical Conference in Lumsden, Oct. 20-23. The topic was: "Sunday celebrations animated by lay people."

Father Florian Renneberg was hospitalized on Sept. 22 for three weeks for surgery. He then spent several weeks at relatives to recuperate.

Father Leo Hinz took part in mid-October in the

annual meetings of the Canadian Canon Law Society in Montreal and of the National Federation of Senates of Priests in Mississauga. He was one of five monks to attend an institute for the Christian initiation of adults in Regina, Dec. 1-4, given by Dr. Christiane Brusselmans. Others who took part were: Fathers Peter Novecosky, Werner Renneberg, Andrew Britz and Bernard Stauber.

Father Maurice Weber attended the Canadian English Vocation Directors Convention in Toronto, Nov. 9-12, on the topic: The Harvest Is Ripe.

Father Lawrence DeMong took part in an institute on Christian initiation given by Dr. Brusselmans at Banff in November. He went to Ottawa on Dec. 9 to continue work on the on-going revision of the Canadian Catechism.

Father Andrew Britz went to Rosthern Nov. 26 to speak to the Mennonite college there on the life-style of monks.

Father Bernard Stauber returned to Canada from Brazil Sept. 17 for a period of study and renewal.

Brother Stanley Vindevoghel returned to Saskatoon for a year of classes at the University of Saskatchewan in early September.

Brother Wolfgang Thiem left on Sept. 14 to visit relatives in Germany for a month.

Father Francis Gannon returned to his hermitage at the abbey at the end of October, after spending several months in Texas visiting relatives and attending the funeral of his mother.

Around the abbey

Several get-togethers in honor of the 1,500th anniversary of the birth of St. Benedict were held this fall. On Aug. 4 about two dozen former confreres and their families came for an afternoon of visiting, an outdoor supper and a program. On Aug. 18 31 clergy and male religious from the province responded to the invitation to visit St. Peter's. The abbey lay staff and their families enjoyed a day of games, touring, visiting and an outdoor supper on Sept. 7.

The discussion about beginning a Bible School for Western Canada at St. Peter's continued with a meeting of several community members and priests from Western Canada here Aug. 7. The

community also discussed it at the annual chapter meeting, Sept. 1.

A roofing crew from Saskatoon was here a month in September. And Sask-tel began installing the new telephone system in mid-October and completed the job a month later.

The harvest this year was very good, especially in view of the early spring and summer drought, Brother Bernard Lange reports. Father Xavier Benning harvested over 5,000 pounds of honey from his 22 hives of bees and Brother Gregory Brodner was kept busy selling over 1,500 dozen cobs of corn from the garden. The rest of the garden produced enough not only for our own use but also for sale to neighbors. However, the potatoes were so abundant that several hundred bags were left in the ground.

Canada's Atmospheric Environment Service recognized 75 years of weather observation at St. Peter's by presenting a plaque to Abbot Jerome Weber on Oct. 21. Current weatherman, Brother Oswald King, was presented with a book. According to the abbey records, the monk with the longest period of service in this department was Brother Bruno Konecsni with 25 years.

A couple of Argentinian grandmothers spoke of the situation of their grandchildren in their country at the Christian Faith Conference, Nov. 8. That evening Leatta Witt of Saskatoon made her oblation as a Benedictine secular oblate during evening Vigils.

John Weber, brother of Father Maurice, spent several weeks at the abbey the latter part of November and early part of December.

One of the visitors of note to the abbey was Carl Weber of Germany, who visited St. Peter's abbey on Sept. 19. He is a brother to Joe Weber, formerly of Muenster and now in St. Mary's Villa. Carl came to St. Gregor in 1926 but returned to Germany in 1929. His brother Willibald is subprior of Metten Abbey and was for many years the rector of their large secondary school. Metten is the European motherhouse of St. Peter's.

The community has accepted a proposal made by Grant Maxwell of Ottawa that he undertake a research report on how the Prairie Messenger reflected and influenced the development of social thought in Saskatchewan since 1930.



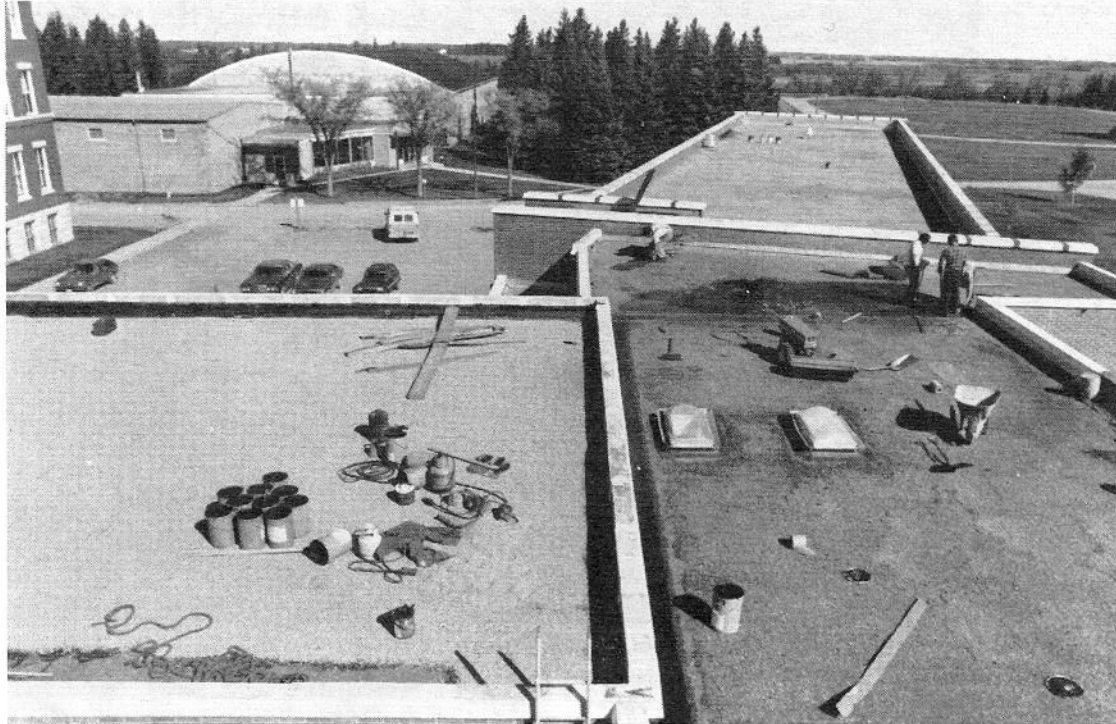
Former members of the community and their families had a get-together with the community on Aug. 4.



Over 30 clergy visited St. Peter's for a special sesquimillennium celebration for the clergy and male religious of Saskatchewan, Aug. 18.



An outdoor supper was part of the program when the lay staff of St. Peter's and their families helped the community celebrate the Sesquimillennium on Sept. 7.



In September a number of flat roofs at the abbey were repaired.

The guestmaster's report

The abbey guest facilities saw moderate use this fall, with several groups cancelling their bookings because of poor registrations.

A number of individuals and groups used the guest quarters in August. Among the individual guests was Vince Herner of Brandon, making a retreat prior to his ordination to the priesthood. A number of guests stayed here to take part in the workshop on lectio divina conducted by Father Hugh Tasch, OSB, Aug. 18-22.

The biggest group of the month was the SEARCH youth weekend, Aug. 22-24. About 55 young people took part in the weekend, including a number from Prince Albert. Shortly after the Searchers left, girls moved into the bottom floor residence as the fall school term resumed. Also taking up residence there was Sister Zita Maier, OSU, who keeps order among the students.

As the university students got back into the swing of college life, two church related groups from Saskatoon came to combine learning with

getting to know each other and their professors better. On Sept. 19-21 36 United Church seminarians from St. Andrew's College used our facilities. A week later over 50 Lutherans showed up for a Lutheran seminary retreat. The seminarians also brought along their wives and, in some cases, their children.

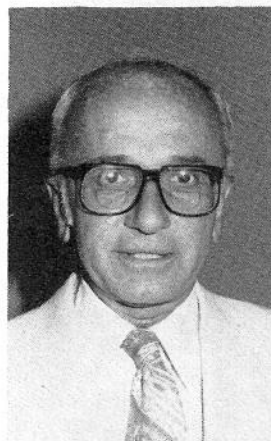
In between the two seminary groups, the department of social services, Regina, conducted a basics of management course for over a dozen supervisors, from Sept. 22-25.

Almost a dozen native catechists from northern Saskatchewan came for a workshop on prayer the first weekend of October. A dozen teenagers from Bethel United Church, Saskatoon, came Oct. 17-19 for a session to prepare them for confirmation.

The National Farmers Union expected a big crowd for a quick meeting called for Oct. 20-21, but only about 25 farmers were able to turn out.

About 45 youth from all across Saskatchewan turned up for an Anglican Youth Council weekend Oct. 24-26. Another youth group, the National

Farmers Youth, attracted about 25 young people for an educational seminar on problems faced by farmers today.



Among the visitors to the abbey this fall were Robert Rambusch of New York, a liturgical consultant, and April Oursler Armstrong.

Deceased brethren, relatives

Father Justin Paul Csanyi, 72, Newark Abbey, Newark, New Jersey, died on June 22.

Abbot Brendan William Downey, 62, fifth abbot of St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, Kansas, died of a heart attack on Sept. 4.

Father Vincent George Crawford, 70, Saint Leo Abbey, Saint Leo, Florida, died on Sept. 10.

Brother Florian Halcin, 92, St. Andrew's Abbey, Cleveland, Ohio, died on Sept. 15, after a long illness.

Father Method Royko, 72, a founding member in 1948 and the second conventual prior of Holy Trinity Monastery, Butler, Pennsylvania, died on Oct. 7.

Father Walter Jendrusak, 75, St. Procopius Abbey, Lisle, Illinois, died Oct. 26 after suffering a stroke earlier this year.

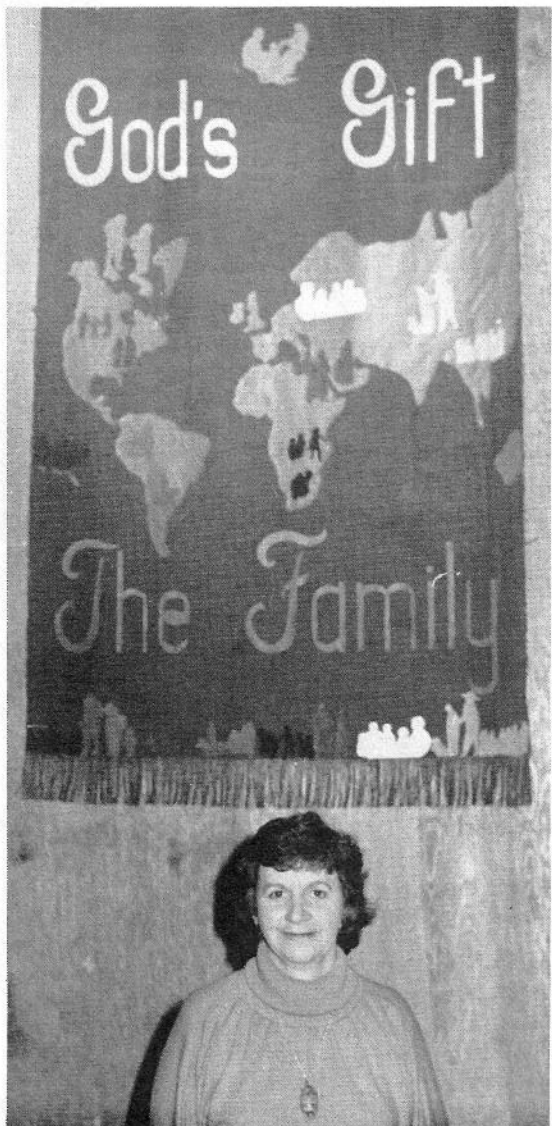
Father Francis X. Clougherty, 85, St. Procopius Abbey, died on Oct. 26.

Father Thomas (George) Jundt, 70, Assumption Abbey, Richardton, N.D., died on Nov. 16.

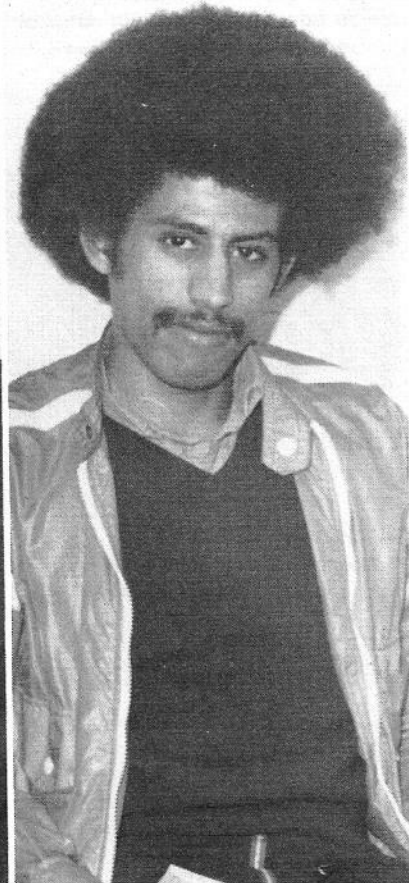
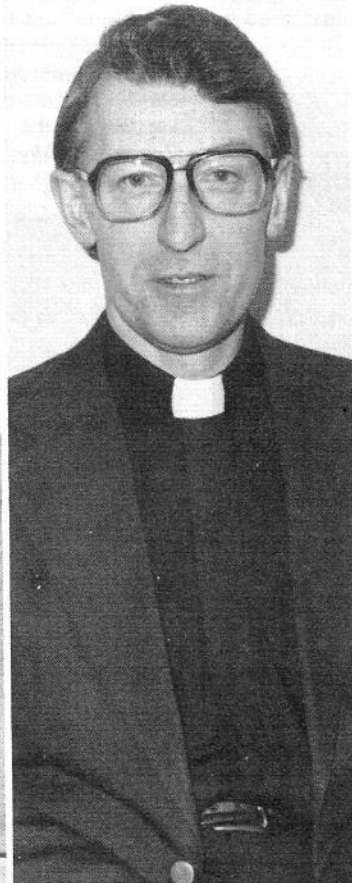
Marie Pratchler, 42, sister of Brother Bernard Lange, died of cancer on Dec. 4.

Mrs. Emily Ludwig, grandmother of Novice William Thurmeier, died on Sept. 28.

Unfortunately, several marriage encounter weekends had to be cancelled this fall because of lack of registration. However, a mini marriage encounter was held on Nov. 23 by the Abbey National Marriage Encounter group with Father Leo Hinz as the guest speaker. The fact that it was Grey Cup Day helped to contribute to a small turnout.



Bettye Lechner of Chicago was the main speaker at this year's Christian Faith Conference, Nov. 7-8.



Father Maurice Weber has been working with Daniel (left) and Esaias Haile, who arrived at St. Peter's on Oct. 28.

St. Peter's sponsors immigrants

Esaias and Daniel Haile arrived at St. Peter's Abbey on Oct. 28.

They are in Canada as immigrants, sponsored by St. Peter's Abbey. They are from Asmara, Eritrea, Ethiopia. Their home state has been involved in a war of independence with Ethiopia for several years now. Three Haile brothers fled their country together to avoid having to serve in the army or fight with the guerrillas.

Esaias, Daniel and their younger brother Efrem

made their way to Italy. They arrived there on Dec. 30, 1977, to join an older brother who was there studying engineering. For the past three years they stayed at Sant' Anselmo, the Benedictine international college in Rome. There they met Father Maurice Weber who studied there from 1976-78.

Still in Eritrea are their parents, four brothers and one sister. Another brother is in Germany.

Esaias, 22, and Daniel, 20, plan to complete their university education and settle in Canada.

New law a concern in Brazil

Father Sylvester Vredegoor expressed his concern in his Christmas letter to the community about the implications of a new law passed in Brazil this fall. The new law affects foreigners. Father Sylvester wrote, in part:

"It becomes more and more difficult to figure out what God desires of us. We had a lawyer explain to us the new decree about foreigners in Brazil; he made it very clear that the whole thing is mainly a guillotine well greased up that can be tripped off by any of a hundred or so tiny 'offences' or differences of opinion. Even not communicating a change of address within the same city or on the same street can be used as the legal handle to get rid of us.

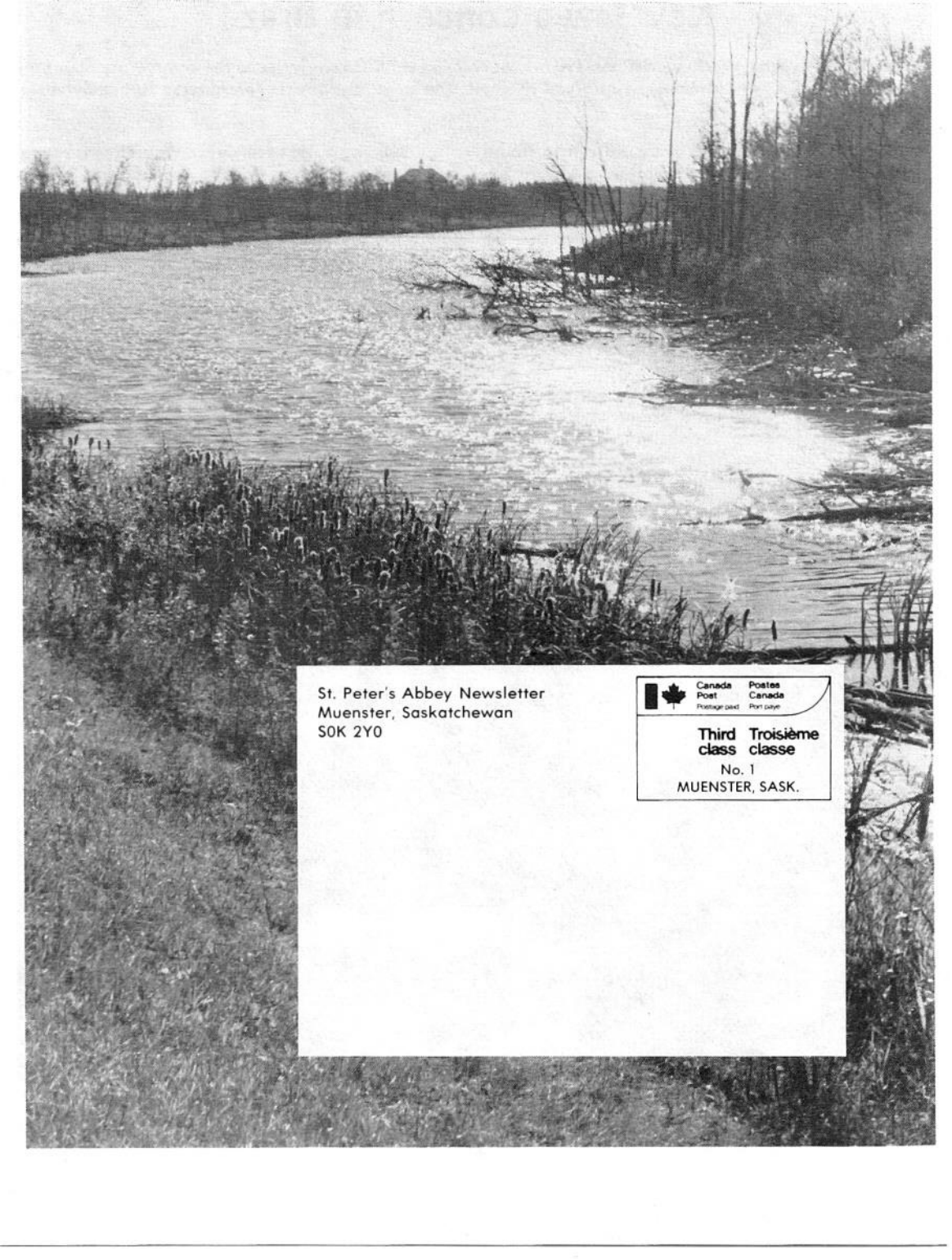
"And why would they want to get rid of us? Thank God the church is no longer what she used to be in Latin America. Thanks to our obedience to our bishops, thanks to Vatican II, we are now seen as the biggest enemy of the established powers.

"Building basic ecclesial communities is recognized as worse than fiddling with atomic bombs and the likes. We foreigners by law now cannot offer religious services to the armed forces, to hospitals and colleges and similar institutions where people are interned.

"Imagine, just doing my duty as a pastor at our three hospitals in the parish is now 'verboten.' The pessimistic thought comes to me from Eligers, 'Baldly, go home!' But we will go on, carefully, as well behaved as possible, for the good of the church, of course. Remember, the bigger struggle is not between the government and the church, but between the government and the people, on whose side the church has now placed itself."



Abbot Jerome Weber presented Sister Isabelle Zoller, OSE, with a certificate of appreciation for her 50 years of religious life and 35 years of service at St. Peter's. A pizza get-together was held on Oct. 19 to celebrate the occasion.



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