



# St. Peter's Abbey Newsletter



Vol. 34 No. 1 Summer and Fall 2013

## Fr. Lawrence celebrates 50 years of priesthood

By Paul Paproski, OSB

Two miracles occurred on Mount Carmel Sunday honoring Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB on his 50th year of priesthood.

The first marvel came from the skies which opened at the beginning of Mass. The clouds departed, sending the rain away, allowing the sunshine to break through. The day began with damp wet weather that threatened to bring the cancellation of the annual outdoor Mass. The skies brought forth sunshine and warm temperatures just before Mass began.

"In addition to the rain stopping for Mass, I experienced another little miracle," Fr. Lawrence remembered. "As the first to receive a ciborium for communion, I went to the top of the hill. I decided where to begin distributing so as to have enough hosts, but soon began to wonder how I would arrange to get more as I was running short and, of all things, gave the last host to the last person who came!" he exclaimed excitedly. Bishop Donald Bolen was the celebrant for Mount Carmel Sunday, July 21. The location was the perfect setting to honor Fr. Lawrence who was raised at St. Benedict in the former St. Peter's Abbey. Parishioners of the abbacy often attended pilgrimages at Mount Carmel.

"I suspect that my first 'pilgrimage' to Mt Carmel was as a baby at the breast. At least that's what I remember of my younger siblings. Our family always attended the pilgrimage. And as Bishop Bolen said, the weather these past two years is telling us that Mary wants this yearly prayer gathering to continue."

Saskatoon Bishop Francis Klein ordained Fr. Lawrence and several others in 1963 at St. Paul's Cathedral in Saskatoon. The setting was unusual for a Benedictine of St. Peter's Abbey. Monks



*CELEBRATES 50TH – Bishop Donald Bolen was the celebrant for the 91st annual Mount Carmel Pilgrimage on Sunday, July 21. The pilgrimage honored Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB who is celebrating his 50th year of priesthood.*

are traditionally ordained at St. Peter's Cathedral at Muenster. Fr. Lawrence isn't sure if anyone from the abbey, besides Abbot Jerome, attended, although he has a vivid memory of the presence of his family and uncle, Frank DeMong, OMI. One photo was taken of Fr. Lawrence to commemorate his special day. The picture shows Fr. Lawrence with his grandmother in the church basement having coffee.

Fr. Lawrence has vivid memories of the first Mass he celebrated back home at St. Benedict.

"My dear mother had made all the Pentecost vestments for celebrant, assistant priest, deacon, subdeacon in bright red raw silk, designed with all the help I could get at St. John's Abbey where I had studied. The chalice of gold and dark red enamel, given by my parents, was designed according to predictions as to

what Vatican II would soon bring about, with everyone receiving the cup. The huge effort put out by my family to have a banquet in the new Quonset machine shed on our farm was clearly a sign of how they supported me throughout my discernment and studies to become a monk and priest," he remarked. His mother prepared a fruit cake in the shape of the main altar of the new church at St. John's Abbey, Minnesota. The cake was baked in a pan built by his brother Ray. The commitment put into making the special cake exemplified the communal effort and work of his family to make the day a success and that still astounds Fr. Lawrence today. The excitement was clouded the following June 3, 1963 with the sad news that "dear" Pope John XXIII had died.

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# A message from Abbot Peter's desk

Just 10 years ago we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Benedictine monks at Muenster in 1903. Now, we have been here for 110 years, though we are not having any special celebrations.

As I was preparing to write this message, a strange coincidence struck me. I came to the monastery as a novice in 1963, exactly 50 years ago. However, I came to St. Peter's College as a student in 1958, which is 55 years ago — half the life of our monastic community here in Saskatchewan.

In addition, Fr. Joseph Ackerman, now pastor at Bruno and Peterson, celebrated his 55th anniversary of ordination this summer. That means he has been serving as a priest in our area for half its history. That is quite a record. At age 88 (89 on Sept. 20), Fr. Joe is the oldest active priest in the Saskatoon Diocese. As far as being the oldest in the community, Br. Wolfgang Thiem beats him by six months. Both still enjoy excellent health.

Speaking of anniversaries, the Ursuline Sisters of Bruno came to this area in 1913 and are celebrating their centennial this year. The Elizabethan Sisters celebrated their centennial two years ago. Both groups have made wonderful contributions to the people in this area but, because of advancing age, most will be leaving to retire in Saskatoon in a

year's time. What a change that will be after a hundred-year presence.

Abbots are often noted for being away from their monasteries. Whether it's giving retreats, attending conferences or celebrations, the demands are numerous and not every invitation can be accepted. Today, with the means of social media one can easily keep in contact with the monastery and with friends. However, one must sympathize with our forbearers for what it was like for them when travel and communication were slower and more difficult.

Our history tells us that Abbot Bruno, for example, was appointed vicar general of the Prince Albert Diocese in 1913, just two years after being named abbot. In 1918 he received an indult to administer the sacrament of confirmation in the diocese and he traveled to Saskatoon for this mission the week of his death in 1919. Earlier, he made several trips to Europe on behalf of the colony, mainly

to recruit sisters for serving as teachers and nurses in St. Peter's Colony. He also filled in for Bishop Pascal in the diocese when he traveled to Europe. At that time, such trips often took several months.

A hundred years later things have changed. But the legacy of the religious has helped to shape the traditions and history of this area. We know that God will continue to provide for the needs of his people as new opportunities are opened up. So it was in the past; so it will be in the future.



*GENERAL CHAPTER — Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB and Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB abbey delegate, met with Abbot Primate Notker Wolff at the General Chapter meeting of the American Cassinese Congregation. The meeting was held, June 16-21, at St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania.*



*ABBOTS' WORKSHOP — Abbot Peter took in the abbots' workshop, Feb. 1-5, at Prince of Peace Abbey near San Diego, Calif.*



*COFFEE BREAK — Some of the monks joined the abbey staff and volunteers for a Christmas coffee break. Special draws were held for prizes.*



# Br. Wolfgang, 89, active in monastic life

By Paul Paproski, OSB

Some deer congregated on the south end of St. Peter's monastery during the last winter and spring where they feasted on corn. Their presence was a welcome sight for the Benedictines who often spotted them in the morning or early evening.

The entertainment was courtesy of Br. Wolfgang Thiem, OSB who fed the deer corn that he picked from the abbey garden in the late summer of 2012. The corn was abundant and many cobs were left unpicked, so Br. Wolfgang decided to use some of them for local wildlife. Perhaps he was aware that the snowfall would be heavier than usual in early 2013 making it more difficult for the deer to forage for food.

This year was a landmark for Br. Wolfgang, 89, who marked his 40th year of profession as a monk at St. Peter's Abbey. He was professed on March 21, the feast of St. Benedict, in 1973. He made a noteworthy decision on his 40th to take piano lessons from Br. Benedict, one of the novices. Br. Wolfgang's desire to learn something new is emblematic of his enthusiasm for monastic life where he has carried out many roles, from serving as a carpenter and mason to gardener and cantor at office. He is most famous for the tomatoes he grows in the abbey greenhouse. Visitors often comment on the quality of the tomatoes which are often dark red, large and very delicious. Br. Wolfgang has also grown large pumpkins and other garden vegetables. Some of his other hobbies are reading, and listening to international news which he likes to discuss with his confreres, and cross-country skiing in the winter.

The Rule of St. Benedict stresses the importance of living a life of moderation, both in prayer and work. Br. Wolfgang has exemplified this teaching well as a Benedictine monk where he is known for being pleasant and cool as a cucumber. He does everything at a leisurely pace, whether in his walking and talking or his work and recreational activities. He is faithful to attending monastic office where he has often been assigned the role of a cantor or reader.

Blessed with good health and a sense of humor, Br. Wolfgang likes to demon-



*ENJOYS OUTDOORS – Br. Wolfgang, 89, enjoys cross-country skiing in the winter. He celebrated his 40th year as a Benedictine monk at St. Peter's Abbey.*

strate, especially to younger monks, his strength by improvising a punch or karate kick in their direction. He often tells them he is "mean and lean." The good health and sharp mind of Br. Wolfgang were especially noticeable four years ago during renovations to the college building of Michael Hall and St. Peter's monastery. He helped with renovations on the top floor of Michael Hall in 2009 and was a major contributor to renovations to the upper and lower floors of St. Peter's monastery between 2010 and 2012. Br. Wolfgang constructed inside walls with insulation in many monastery rooms, and smashed some cinderblock walls in a few rooms to convert them into larger units. He is often asked to help with small carpentry projects, whether building shelves or fixing picture frames and tables.

Br. Wolfgang was born in 1924 in Schwab Gmund, south central Germany, in a predominantly Catholic area. The Second World War was devastating Europe when he graduated from high school. Students in his school were taught German and two foreign languages, so he used the opportunity to learn some French and English. At the age of 18 he was drafted into the air force and then transferred to an anti-aircraft unit in Germany.

As the Russians advanced towards Germany, Br. Wolfgang was given the choice to join the infantry to face the

Russians or join the parachutist division. Br. Wolfgang chose the parachute option knowing it would move westward, away from the Russian front. He then learned to work with horses to cope with a severe gasoline shortage in Germany. At the end of the war, Br. Wolfgang was sent back to Ruhr in Germany and later taken prisoner by the Americans on Christmas Eve in 1945. He had served two-and-a-half years in the military and was to spend another three-and-a-half years as a Prisoner Of War.

Previous to the war Br. Wolfgang had thought of going to America because of the unstable political condition in Germany. Br. Wolfgang joined a secular institute founded by an Oblate priest in Trois Rivières, Quebec, and helped build residences and a chapel for the women of the secular institute. He worked in brick-laying in the summertime, and in the winter he did inside carpenter work. He travelled to Haiti where he helped construct buildings for the secular institute.

Br. Wolfgang spent a few months in a Trappist monastery and read the *Prairie Messenger*, the most worldly newspaper allowed there. He decided, in the summer of 1971, to visit St. Peter's Abbey. He had helped the Trappists with haying and found himself doing the same work at the abbey. Br. Wolfgang entered the novitiate and made his profession as a brother in March of 1973.

# Ordination to priesthood is a community event

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Fr. Lawrence recalls an interesting memory during his preparations for celebrating Mass. Celebrations were a little more complicated, then, when Latin was still a part of the church liturgy.

"I had a repeated dream of being out at the altar with no clothes on. Well, later, while studying catechetics at Laval, a professor said of me, 'He has the priesthood in his bones!' The fact that this painful dream never happened again after ordination says how my priesthood and my life had come together, something for which I am truly grateful," he remarked.

The Second Vatican Council was held only a few years following Fr. Lawrence's ordination and the council underlined how everyone needs to read the signs of the times, he commented. The experiences of the past 50 years have taught Fr. Lawrence that the most powerful teacher is "life." His studies in religious education made him aware that no experience, no event, is outside our faith or outside our continuous conversation with God. This belief was heightened through his experiences in serving the directorship of the National Office of Religious Education in Ottawa, 1982 to 1986, and when he was asked to return to Brazil in 1998 to do mission work.



**BLESSED SACRAMENT** – Bishop Donald Bolen leads a procession with the Blessed Sacrament, July 21, at the 91st Mount Carmel Pilgrimage. The servers are: from left, Kirk Duffley, Angelica Hill and Joan Hill of St. Scholastica Church, Burr.

"My own experience of trust was undoubtedly deepened by my parents whose example was extraordinary. The most powerful was when I had to tell my poor mom in Phoenix that her son Roger and his family had died in a car crash. I began with, 'Mom, I have good news and bad news. The good news is that Dad has visitors.'

Catholic Church that has gone from the stable vision of Pius XII to the exciting and joyful one of John XXIII; then to the puzzling death of John Paul I, and to the occasional reversals of Vatican II during the leadership of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. God is ever so much bigger than our human foibles, he commented. God's infinite patience is still gathering us on a deeper level than our ideologies and leading us as the people in the desert to a promised land.

Looking to the future Fr. Lawrence remarked that his commitment to justice continues to inspire him to do more things. He said he has had some powerful experiences concerning the call to justice, especially with the personal experience and experiences of others being bullied. The call to justice has deepened over the years and the bottom line of the Gospel is simply whether people care at all about other human beings, all of them, not just special friends.

"I hope to keep on struggling against the bullies who demean, degrade and destroy this beautiful world, especially its people, and try my best to make the beauty of God and God's creation shine forth. And no matter what I do and where I am, I hope to be a God-seeker as a monk and a bridge builder as a priest."

"Who died?" she asked. "When I explained that Roger and his family were in a car accident I was sure she understood that they had all died. After allowing her time to cry, I called and her first question was, 'How's Marion and the kids?' It was heartbreaking to say all four of them had died. Her immediate response was like biblical Job: 'This is the Year of the Family! They're all together!'"

Reflecting on the church over the past 50 years, Fr. Lawrence said that he has experienced a



**HORSESHOES** – Abbot Peter Novacosky, OSB throws a horseshoe at the annual Priests Sports Days at St. Peter's Abbey. Watching are Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner of Saskatoon, left, and Chris Bencharski of Meadow Lake, member of the KC State Council.



# Novices begin new journey at St. Peter's Abbey

By Paul Paproski, OSB

Five men have responded with generous hearts to let God's word become enfolded in their lives through the monastic way of life, Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB said, March 21, at a Mass celebrating the feast day of St. Benedict and Rite of Initiation into Monastic Life.

"Like Peter in today's Gospel, they've heard the invitation to leave all things to follow Jesus and the payoff will be hundredfold blessings and to inherit eternal life," he said referring to the five candidates at St. Peter's Abbey who were being invested as novices.

"St. Paul tells the Ephesians to put on the whole armor of God. Well, St. Benedict refines this further in his Rule, outlining the niche armor of the monastic way of life, the vows, the tools of good works, community life, community prayer, stability and obedience. St. Paul encourages us to stand firm, to stand firm not only when days are good, but also to stand firm when days are difficult and bad," Abbot Peter remarked.

The five men, who first entered St. Peter's Abbey as candidates in September of 2012, were invested as novices to officially mark a new stage in their monastic journey. The candidates publically requested at the ceremony, that they be allowed to enter the novitiate. A community member responded on the candidate's behalf with his acceptance and recommendation. The community then gave its approval. The novices were given their monastic names and then put on Benedictine habits. Three of the novices, Linden Predy, 19, of Saskatoon; Christopher Weber, 36, of Hanover, Ontario; and Peter van Ginkel, 50, of Winnipeg adopted religious names of saints. Linden will now be known as Stephen; Christopher will be called Damian; and Peter is Benedict. The other novices are Andreas Hofer, 29, of New Zealand, and Dominic Leo, 42, of Vancouver.

Br. Andreas, originally from Austria, came from New Zealand where he was self-employed in residential, commercial and industrial construction, as well as carpentry, joinery and cabinet making. His skills in carpentry have been noticeable around the abbey where he has helped in repair and construction. Br. Andreas noted that he has a special con-



*NOVICES – Five men were invested as novices, March 21, at St. Peter's Abbey. They include: from left, Br. Andreas Hofer of New Zealand; Br. Damian (Christopher) Weber of Hanover, Ontario; Br. Stephen (Linden) Predy of Saskatoon; Br. Dominic Leo of Vancouver, B.C.; and Br. Benedict (Peter) van Ginkel, of Winnipeg.*

nection to Jesus who was a carpenter before beginning his ministry.

The youngest novice, Br. Stephen, who has attended university for one year, said it is an honor to be accepted into the monastic community. His model, Jesus, walked with a meek and humble heart and he wants to learn how to let go of vanity, pride and all worldly passions to follow Christ.

It is hard to believe that the six months of candidacy have come to a close and another phase of monastic life has begun, Br. Damian remarked. The next phase of the monastic journey will be helpful in learning what it means to live as a faithful monk of St. Peter's Abbey. Br. Damian said his aspirations for the novitiate year will be to do God's will through prayer, and continuing to learn how everything depends on God.

Br. Damian completed a year of studies in theology at the Seminary of Christ the King in Mission, B.C. Previously, he worked five years in the lay apostolate through the Secular Franciscan order. He resided in the Diocese of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, where he lived and worked at Our Lady of Grace Monastery, doing maintenance and assisting in the retreat house.

"Wearing a habit is helping me to understand my role in a more meaningful way as a member of St. Peter's Abbey," Br. Benedict said. He joked that his habit makes him look taller. He is looking forward to his next year of study, spiritual reading and scripture. Br. Benedict, a musician, has been playing the organ for monastic office and teaching Gregorian chant.

"Though I knew that this was an important step in my monastic journey, there weren't any nerves involved before the event, as I did not comprehend the enormity of the investiture that was soon going to take place," Br. Dominic commented when reflecting on his new role as a novice. The ceremony at the Mass opened him to sensing the awe and wonder of the new phase of monastic life. The rite of initiation gave him the feeling that he was one more step closer to Jesus and with the members of the monastic community.

Br. Dominic worked as an Information Technology (IT) technician and computer programmer analyst in Vancouver for the Knights of Columbus. He spent two years of seminary at the Benedictine monastery at Westminster Abbey in Mission, BC.

# Benedictines minister through presence

By Paul Paproski, OSB

St. Peter's College Campus Ministry received a shot in the arm this summer when the Saskatchewan Knights of Columbus Charitable Foundation donated \$2,500 towards its work. The dona-



**SPEAKS ABOUT UKRAINE** – Fr. Demetrius Wasylyniuk, OSB, of St. Peter's College Campus Ministry welcomes Srs. Theodosia, SSJ middle, and Sophia, SSJ to St. Peter's College. Sr. Theodosia was the guest speaker at a noon hour luncheon, sponsored by campus ministry. She spoke about the Ukraine and the work of the Sisters of St. Joseph (SSJ) in the Ukraine. Srs. Theodosia and Sophia live in Saskatoon where they operate a nursing home.

tion will be used to help Campus Ministry in its mandate to promote a Benedictine presence and Christian spirituality at St. Peter's College, Campus Ministry chairperson Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB said.

The college campus ministry team has brought in guest speakers who have spoken to students and staff on topics ranging from journaling and Christian customs to the problems of cults which are still present today. The presentations were given during luncheons known as Lunch with Benedict, Fr. Paul remarked.

"We have been very privileged to have Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR, of the Eparchy of Saskatoon speak on subjects ranging from Byzantine spirituality to our attachment to technology. Sr. Theodosia Papirnik, SSJ of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Saskatoon addressed the Ukraine and her work with orphanages in the Ukraine. Rev. Colin Clay, an Anglican minister, has addressed cults. The students and staff learned about aspects of Benedictine spirituality from guest speakers Abbot Peter Novecosky,

OSB, Frs. Demetrius Wasylyniuk, OSB and Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB.

Campus ministry sponsors a welcome lunch at the beginning of the school term with tours of the campus and draws.

During the course of the year students are invited to take part in various campus ministry events. Some of the events have included: writing contests on

grace, the meaning of Christmas and Easter; a Seder Supper (that commemorates Passover), and presentations on Alpha (basics of Christianity).

One of the highlights of the year is the annual Medieval Feast held on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday. The feast cele-



**CAMPUS MINISTRY** – Brad Lefebvre of Humboldt, left, representing the Saskatchewan Knights of Columbus Charitable Foundation, presents \$2,500 to Rob Harasymchuk, president of St. Peter's College. The money will be used towards the St. Peter's College Campus Ministry program.

brates the beginning of Lent. Participants dress in medieval costumes and enjoy a menu of medieval food at a banquet where the plates are made of bread. A king and queen are the guests of honour. Everyone is entertained with singing, charades, poetry and other fun.

"We are always looking for new ideas to bring to our program," Fr. Paul said.



**MEDIEVAL FEAST** – Benedictine monks joined students and guests at the annual Medieval Feast held just before Lent. Participants dress in medieval costumes and take part in fun and games. The Medieval Feast is sponsored by Campus Ministry.



# College renovations strengthen community

By Paul Paproski, OSB

Visitors to St. Peter's College often comment on how impressed they are with the bright new look of the college and quality of facilities in the classrooms and science labs. The atmosphere for learning has improved immensely since the completion of the renovations two years ago, according to College President Robert Harasymchuk.

"There are more comfortable classrooms with brighter walls, much improved lighting and temperature control. The student lounge has become a place of community for our students. Guests and visitors are quick to comment on the 'new' facilities which are fully modern and yet have the traditional look which makes it still feel like the same place," he remarked.

The renovations have been important for everyone in the surrounding community, as well, who use the college facilities. The college building (Michael Hall) is ideal for choir practice and meetings, and the gymnasium is excellent for soc-

cer and other sports. The upgrading has encouraged the administration and staff to continue looking for new ways and means to improve student experience. New program opportunities are presently being developed for the next school year.

"We are blessed to attract qualified people who serve the college, and we are looking forward to a great start of a new academic year in September," Harasymchuk added. The college recently welcomed "some fantastic new people" on board in administration.

One of the challenges of the administration is to complete the final phase of fundraising to help pay the remaining \$4 million renovation debt.

"Fundraising for the college is a constant pursuit. Renovating and maintaining facilities of this size and scope is costly, but we remain committed to ensuring that it is available to all our stakeholders for education, sport and recreation, the arts, retreats and all the other uses that people find from our campus. We continue to fundraise to pay for

the renovations project that restored Michael Hall to serve the community. We count on our alumni and the community to support the projects that make St. Peter's the special place that it is and we thank all those donors that keep us in mind with their generosity and recognition of the importance of purpose the college holds for this region of Saskatchewan," he remarked.

Renovations affected every floor of Michael Hall which was gutted, rebuilt and refurbished with new floors, walls, doors, lighting and windows. Doorway entrances were widened, bathrooms upgraded, and wiring brought to standard to enable information technology systems to be used. There are three new science labs on the basement floor. Students can study and visit in a student lounge and recreation room, and exercise in a modern fitness centre that is popular among students and staff. One of the most noticeable changes is the new elevator and shaft, a new addition to the west side of the building.

Renovations were made possible through the federal Knowledge Infrastructure grant program, the provincial Ministry of Advanced Education, donations from alumni and others who gave through to the capital campaign. Maurice Soloudre was the architect and Miners Construction was the project manager. Support was provided by the college board of governors and monks of St. Peter's Abbey.

The college presently offers classes in arts and science, business/commerce, agriculture and kinesiology, to fulfill the entry requirements to colleges such as Dentistry, Medicine, Nutrition, Pharmacy, Nursing, Vet-Medicine, Law and Education, or to complete the college's innovative writing diploma program.



*LOOKING UPWARDS – St. Peter's College, a landmark of the local area since 1921, looks heavenly with its new elevator and west entrance. The elevator, standing 85 feet high, was designed by Maurice Soloudre Architect Ltd. and will accommodate wheelchairs and stretchers. The miniature bird house in the shape of Michael Hall was designed and built by Miners Constructor, project manager for the renovations.*

# People and events around the abbey

## October 2012 — onward

October 24 — Reva Bauer was elected first female mayor of Muenster. Reva was an employee of St. Peter's College at the time.

November 6 — Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB gave a presentation to St. Gabriel Parish in Biggar on Traits of a Healthy Spirituality.

November 15 — Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB gave a presentation to St. Francis Xavier Parish in Saskatoon on Traits of a Healthy Spirituality.

November 22 — Sr. Theodosia of Sisters of St. Joseph in Saskatoon spoke to students and staff at a Lunch with Benedict, sponsored by St. Peter's College Campus Ministry. Her topic was The Ukraine.

November 29 — A book launch for Rule of Faith, Fr. Andrew Britz's posthumous second collection of editorials, was held at the Saskatoon cathedral.

December 19 — Some of the monks joined the abbey staff and volunteers for a Christmas coffee break.

The novices and a live-in visited Fr. Rudolph Novecosky at the Humboldt hospital.

Two presses, originally from Marian Press in Battleford, were resold.

December 30 — Archbishop Albert LeGatt of St. Boniface, Manitoba visited the abbey.

## January 2013 — onward

January 23-25 — Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB attended a meeting in Montreal of the Council of the Canadian Religious Conference.

January 25-27 — The annual Newman Retreat of St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon was held at St. Peter's Abbey.

February 1-5 — Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB attended a workshop for North American abbots at Prince of Peace Abbey near San Diego.

February 10 — Br. Anthony Nguyen, OSB celebrated New Years with the Vietnamese community in Saskatoon.

February 11 — Several monks received the Anointing of the Sick on World Day of Prayer for the Sick.

February 12 — Students and guests enjoyed feasting medieval food from bread plates at the annual Medieval



*COVENANT OF CARE — Blake Sittler, co-director of pastoral services of the Diocese of Saskatoon, addresses the Covenant of Care at St. Peter's Abbey. The covenant, adopted by the Diocese of Saskatoon, promotes a healthy environment for employees and volunteers in the church.*

Feast, sponsored by St. Peter's College Campus Ministry. The event was in the Jerome Assembly Room.

February 22 — Blake Sittler of the Diocese of Saskatoon, co-director of pastoral services of the Diocese of Saskatoon, spoke about the Covenant of Care model, adopted by the Diocese of Saskatoon. The Covenant of Care promotes a healthy work environment in the diocese.

February 26 — March 1 — Abbot Peter attended the annual meeting of the Assembly of Western Catholic Bishops, of which he is secretary. The meeting was held in Edmonton.

March 11 — Rev. Colin Clay of Saskatoon spoke at a Lunch with Benedict on the theme of Cults to staff and students of St. Peter's College. The

noon hour luncheon was sponsored by St. Peter's College Campus Ministry.

March 14 — Abbot Peter was interviewed on CBC radio about the election of Pope Francis.

March 19 — Abbot Peter attended the installation of Murray Chatlain as archbishop of The Pas Manitoba.

March 21 — Five men were invested as novices at St. Peter's Abbey. They included: Andreas Hofer of New Zealand; Damian (Christopher) Weber of Hanover, Ontario; Stephen (Linden) Predy of Saskatoon; Dominic Leo of Vancouver, B.C.; and Benedict (Peter) van Ginkel, of Winnipeg.

March 23 — Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB spoke to the Oblates on Oblate Day on the topic of The Observance of Lent.

March 25 — Several monks attended Chrism Mass at Holy Family Cathedral in Saskatoon.

March 25 — Fr. Rudolph Novecosky, OSB received an artificial heart pacemaker at Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon.

April 27 to May 24 — Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB attended a monastic enrichment program in Rome which included classes and tours of churches and historic sites.

*Continued on next page*



*NURSIA — St. Benedict attended this church in Nursia, Italy as a young man before leaving for school in Rome. The church bears his name.*



*Continued from previous page*

April 28 to May 1 — Fr. Michel Proulx, O Praem, president of the Canadian Religious Conference, visited St. Peter's Abbey and met with some monks involved with formation people.



**VISITS ABBEY** — Fr. Michel Proulx of Quebec, Order of Premonstratensians (O Praem), president of the Canadian Religious Conference, visits with some formation people. Fr. Michel visited the abbey April 28 - May 1.

May 1-3 — Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB attended a meeting in Saskatoon of the Council of the CRC.

May 3-5 — Fr. Alain Rodrigue, CMM, Quebec counsellor of the CRC, visited the abbey.

May 3 to 5 — Fr. Alain Rodrigue, CMM, of Sherbrooke, Que., a member



**WELCOMES VISITOR** — Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB, left, welcomes Fr. Alain Rodrigue of the Congregation of Marionhill Missionaries (CMM), of Sherbrooke, Quebec, a member of Canadian Religious Council, who visited the abbey in May after a meeting in Saskatoon.

of CRC council, visited the abbey after a meeting in Saskatoon.

May 6 — Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB attended a CRC meeting of JPIC in Saskatoon.

May 12-16 — The annual monastic retreat of St. Peter's Abbey was preached by Sr. Lorraine Caza, CND of Montreal.

Several sisters and diocesan priests attended.

May 20-24 — Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB gave a retreat to the priests of the Diocese of Calgary.

May 27-31 — Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB gave a retreat to the priests of the Diocese of Calgary.

May 29 — Saskatoon CTV featured Muenster on its newscast and did some interviews at the abbey and college.

June 2 — Br. Anthony Nguyen, OSB graduated from the Saskatoon Lay Formation Program

with a Mass at the cathedral.

June 8-13 — Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB preached a retreat to the Sisters of Martha in Antigonish, NS.

June 16 - 21 — Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB and Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB attended a general chapter meeting of the American Cassinese Congregation at St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania. A general chapter meeting is held once every three years.

June 26 — Br. Cosmas Epifano, OSB returned for a four month break from his theology studies in Rome.

July 2 — Archbishop Albert LeGatt of St. Boniface, Manitoba visited St. Peter's Abbey.

July 10 — Renovations began on the inside of Scholastica residence. It is being upgraded and converted into a guest residence.

July 12-23 — Michael Miller, OSB of St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania visited St. Peter's



**RETREAT** — Sr. Lorraine Caza, CND, of Montreal preached the community retreat this year, May 12 - 16. Several other religious and clergy also attended.

Abbey for a holiday. This is the third time Br. Michael has spent his holidays at St. Peter's Abbey.

July 16-26 — Fr. Rudolph Novecosky, OSB visited friends, Walter and Marla Niekamp, in Nova Scotia. Walter and Marla live in Middle West Pubnico, along the Pubnico harbor which is an Acadian settlement. Fr. Rudolph joined the Niekamps for coffee at the Red Cap restaurant each day at 2 p.m. Most of the patrons there were lobster fishermen who usually spoke about lobster fishing and the lobster industry. The lobster season was closed during the summer. Fr. Rudolph was given a tour of the industry by one of the fisherman who owned a lobster boat. The opening day of the lobster season is called "Dumping Day". All the lobster boats are lined up at the mouth of the harbor and the minute the season opens, they travel to their special fishing spots. Walter took Fr. Rudolph to the Bay of Fundy on a whale watching trip. They saw six humpbacks, two fine backs and two minke whales, plus porpoises, sheer water birds and seals. It was interesting to watch the tide come in, Fr. Rudolph said, and go out twice a day. The tide at Pubnico Harbor is about 12 feet while in the Bay of Fundy it was about 19 feet. It was a great holiday, Fr. Rudolph remarked. Marla and Walter were gracious hosts and it was good to see them.

*Continued on page 10*



# People and events around the abbey

*Continued from page 9*

July 20 — Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB, guest speaker at Oblate Day, spoke on the theme of Spirituality.

July 22-23 — Thirty-five priests took



**OLD FAITHFUL** — Fr. Joe Ackerman, OSB, 88, stands in front of his 1982 Volvo. The car has been faithful in helping Fr. Joe travel many thousands of kilometers for pastoral work. The Volvo has more than 705,000 kilometers on its odometer and is still working fine, he says. Fr. Joe is pastor of Bruno and Peterson.

part in the annual Sports Day at the abbey. It was sponsored by the Saskatchewan Knights of Columbus.

July 22-23 — Br. Kurt Van Kuren, OSB attended the Saskatchewan Agricultural Producers' Association mid-term meeting in Regina. He presented a proposal for a weed control mobile App, which was received favorably by several weed control specialists from the University of Guelph.

July 25 — Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB gave a tour of some parishes of the former St. Peter's Abbey and shrines in Prince Albert to the five novices, Br. Cosmas Epifano, OSB, junior; and two men considering monastic life.

August 6-8 — Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB attended the annual Supreme KC Convention in San Antonio, Texas.

August 14 — Br. Basil Schaan, OSB went on a two-week holiday to B.C.

August 18 — Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB attended the centennial celebration of his former parish, St. Dominic Roman Catholic Church in Hudson Bay, Sask. Prince Albert Diocese Bishop Albert

Thevenot was the celebrant. Con-celebrating were Bishop Emeritus Blaise Morand, Fr. Mariusz Zajac, former pastor Fr. Phinh Dinh Do of Edam and Fr. Paul Paproski. The parish church, built in 1983, was the first new church approved by Bishop Blaise when he began serving as bishop of the Prince Albert Diocese in 1983. Bishop Blaise retired in 2008.

August 19 — Several monks attended the annual clergy BBQ at the bishop's house in Saskatoon.

September 1 — Some Benedictines attended a come and go tea for Ursulines at St. Augustine Hall in Humboldt in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Ursulines in the district.

September 2 — A tri-community celebration honoring the Ursulines was held at St. Augustine's Roman Catholic



**BR. COSMAS** — Br. Cosmas Epifano, OSB, a theology student of St. Peter's Abbey, stands in front of the Sts. Cosmas and Damian Basilica in the centre of Rome. Br. Cosmas has completed two years of theology.

Church in Humboldt. The event began with a Mass and was followed by dinner.

October 8 — Br. Cosmas Epifano, OSB returned to his theology studies in Rome.



**APPRECIATION** — Marilyn Tebbe of Muenster, second from left, was presented a quilt by Saskatchewan Stitches members during their July workshop at St. Peter's Abbey. The quilt is in recognition of Marilyn's dedication to Saskatchewan Stitches as executive housekeeper of St. Peter's Abbey Guest Wing. Presenting the quilt are: from left, Wendy Toye of Humboldt, owner of Haus of Stitches and founder of Saskatchewan Stitches, (Marilyn Tebbe); Pat Hamaluk of Clyde, Alberta, assistant, Saskatchewan Stitches; and Fr. Demetrius Wasyluniuk, OSB, guest master of St. Peter's Abbey Guest Wing.



# Office of Vigils is simplified by Oblate

By Paul Paproski, OSB

Visitors to St. Peter's Abbey who attend the office of Vigils will be finding it easier to pray with the monks. The office of Vigils has been simplified and reformatted so that Vigils may be prayed from one book during evening prayer, and not from two to four books that are used interchangeably. The 150 prayers of the psalms are recited in the office of Vigils over a four-week period. Amongst the psalms are special introductory prayers (antiphonals) and canticles (sung prayers from scripture). The office of Vigils is prayed from antiphonals (books) that reflect the seasons of the year. It was often difficult for visitors to understand the four-week system and follow along when they were not used to the format, according to Oblate Pat Whittaker of Edmonton. The office has been updated by Whittaker with the approval and help of Abbot Peter Novacosky, OSB.

"Many times in my 26 years as an Oblate of St. Peter's Abbey, I had seen how frustrated guests would become while trying to follow the office of Vigils, and how distracting it was for monks to be constantly walking over to the guests to make sure they were on the correct page," she commented.

"About a year and a half ago, I went to the abbot to ask permission to compile the office of Vigils into an easy-to-use booklet, similar to Lauds (morning prayer) and Vespers (evening prayer). My goal was to simplify the ferial (ordinary) office of Vigils to make it easier for guests and candidates to follow. Vigils is the final office of the day and it is my favourite. It was also the most complicated to follow and I basically wanted to simplify it."

Fr. Andrew Britz, OSB had already been working on a new simplified format for Vigils. Fr. Andrew enjoyed liturgy and keeping busy, Whittaker commented. He was working on his second book during the time he was improving the final office of the day. Fr. Andrew typed all the 150 psalms prayed in office and gave them to Whittaker in an electronic copy. (USB) That kind gesture saved a lot of work, she remarked. Abbot Peter has a background in liturgy and used his knowledge of the psalms to ensure they corresponded to the

Grail Translation from the Hebrew that is used at the abbey. The numbering of the psalms in the old antiphonals did not always correspond to the numbering used in the Grail translation. The number was changed for the simplified office.

Using Fr. Andrew's file, Whittaker prepared the first draft of psalms for Vigils and double-checked their numbering in the psalter (Grail translation) to ensure that they matched. The work was time consuming, but necessary as some of the inclusive language used by Fr. Andrew was not the same as the language of the original psalter, she added.

The work of Whittaker went so well



*UPDATES ANTIPHONALS – Oblate Pat Whittaker of Edmonton works on the new antiphonals (books) for St. Peter's Abbey office of Vigils. The updated books will combine the prayers of Vigils, covering four weeks, into two books. The new books will make it easier to follow the office of Vigils. Pat has simplified Vigils as well, for liturgical seasons throughout the year.*

that she continued simplifying the office of Vigils for other liturgical seasons other than Ordinary Time. She simplified Vigils for Lent, Advent, Christmas and Easter, and later for feast days, solemnities, commons and other celebrations.

## Priests compete in Sports Day

By Paul Paproski, OSB

"The annual clergy sports day has become something that many of us really look forward to. It's a great opportunity to meet up with the priests of the other dioceses in the province, in a context of recreation and friendship," Saskatoon Bishop Donald Bolen said. "I'm immensely grateful to the Knights of Columbus for organizing the day and to St. Peter's Abbey for hosting us," he remarked when commenting on the Priests Sports Day, July 22 and 23, sponsored by the Saskatchewan Knights of Columbus. "Next year I will make an effort to get in shape before the clergy Sports Day, instead of being incredibly stiff for several days afterwards," he joked.

Among the participants at this year's event were 35 priests, four KCs from the state board and two from other councils, one seminarian and one monk, according to State Church Activities Director Chris Bencharski of Meadow Lake. The event began Monday evening with visiting and

socializing around cards, darts, and ping pong. The following day was more structured where there was the choice of either more rigorous physical activities such as soccer, volleyball and basketball and less-physically demanding competitions of ladder golf, horseshoes, ping pong and cards. The Priests Sports Day is designed to provide a relaxing day for the priests and to enhance fraternity between the Knights and the priests, Bencharski said.

"The idea for the event was sparked three years ago when the State Board, through State Chaplain Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR of the Eparchy of Saskatoon, asked the bishops of Saskatchewan how the Knights of Columbus State Board could assist the priests. The bishops requested that the Knights of Columbus sponsor an annual sports day for the priests," Bencharski commented.

"We will probably leave the format the same for next year but may include a cultural component on the first evening next year for part of the time."

# Visitors leave Rome with eternal memories

By Paul Paproski, OSB

Rome has been described as an international city, a spiritual centre, a place of scholarship, culture and history. Rome is truly all these things and, may I add, a city that is crowded with visitors from all over the world. I had the privilege of visiting Rome on a four-week monastic enrichment program, April 27 to May 24, attended by 10 Benedictines from monasteries in the United States, India and Canada. My first impression of Rome was the enormity of the crowds in the eternal city. Visitors often crowded narrow streets that were lined by small shops and restaurants. The streets led everyone to many historical sites, churches, museums, and public squares (piazzas), some of which had beautiful fountains and displays of wares and food.

The monastic enrichment program was centred at Sant' Anselmo, a pontifical university and the official residence for Benedictines in Rome. Sant' Anselmo has its own faculty and offers classes in sacred studies. Some of the faculty members provided the enrichment program with classes in scripture, spirituality and liturgy. Program co-ordinator, Fr. Patrick Regan of St. Joseph Abbey in Louisiana, led us on tours of churches, monasteries and historical sites. We travelled outside of Rome to Nursia, the birthplace of St. Benedict; Subiaco, the place of solitude where St. Benedict began his monastic journey; and Monte Cassino, the monastery he founded and lived in after leaving Subiaco.

I was the lone Canadian monk in the program, accompanied by seven monks from abbeys in the United States and two from India. I had the pleasure of visiting with two Canadian Benedictines from Westminster Abbey in Mission, B.C who are residing at Sant' Anselmo, and taking classes at various pontifical institutes in Rome. Br. Cosmas Epifano, OSB of St.

Published and printed by the Benedictine community of St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Sask.

Editor: Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB

Logo by Kurt Van Kuren, OSB

ST. PETER'S PRESS, MUENSTER, SK



*MASS AT ST. PETER'S — A crowd of approximately 200,000 awaits Pope Francis before Mass in St. Peter's Square.*

Peter's Abbey is presently studying theology in Rome and I was able to enjoy some good Italian coffee with him on a few occasions.

The monastic enrichment program began with the celebration of Sunday Mass at St. Peter's Square with Pope Francis. We sat with some 200,000 other parishioners in temperatures that seemed to go into the high 20s C. The heat did not dampen the enthusiasm of the crowd which clapped with excitement when Pope Francis came to the front of St. Peter's Basilica. I did not understand the words of the Mass, celebrated in Italian, though it was obvious the crowd appreciated what Pope Francis had to say in his homily. Sometimes they

cheered or broke out in applause. The Mass ended with the pope travelling through the narrow lanes of St. Peter's Square to shake hands and bless people. Many mothers and fathers lifted up their children for the pontiff to bless. I wore my St. Peter's Abbey Oblate hat at the Mass

which has the name of our abbey on the back. Two people behind me asked if I was from Saskatchewan. I told them I was and they said they were from Alberta.

I saw the pope on another occasion when the enrichment program members attended a special service known as an "audience with the pope."

The service began with the pope travelling on his pope-mobile throughout St. Peter's Square, blessing people and shaking hands. The pope spent some 40 minutes with the people in the square who were exuberant over his warmth and closeness. The pope offered everyone a special blessing and said the blessing extended to their families.



*GREET'S CROWD — Pope Francis waves to an enthusiastic crowd following Mass in St. Peter's Square.*