

Special Sesquicentennial Issue

Volume 6 • Issue 2 • Fall 2006

THE ABBEY BANNER

Magazine of Saint John's Abbey

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and Novice Peregrine Rinderknecht, OSB,
Saint John's Oldest and Youngest Monks*

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The Abbey Banner
Magazine of
Saint John's Abbey
Volume 6, Issue 2
Fall 2006

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Printer: Palmer Printing, St. Cloud, Minnesota



Member Catholic Press Association

The Abbey Banner is published three times annually (spring, fall, winter) by the Benedictine monks of Saint John's Abbey for our relatives, friends and Oblates.

The Abbey Banner is online at
www.sja.osb.org/AbbeyBanner

Saint John's Abbey, Box 2015, Collegeville,
Minnesota 56321.

A Cure for the Sesquicentennial Syndrome

by Daniel Durken, OSB

As I was putting this Special Sesquicentennial Issue together I realized that readers may have an acute case of double-vision as you peruse these pages. The cause is what I call the Sesquicentennial Syndrome, namely, looking too long at the past and too far into the future.

Yet this is what a Sesquicentennial Celebration is all about. We look back with gratitude to where we came from and we look ahead with hope to where we are going. But we cannot forget that we are in the present, here and now.

Saint Benedict would not have written his *Rule* if he had not looked ahead to those who would follow him. He nevertheless reminds us, "Every day the voice from heaven calls out this charge: 'Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts'" (Prol. 9-10). Please underline "every day" and "today."

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, the monks of Saint John's received an inspiring sesquicentennial gift that brings past, present and future together. At the annual renewal of our vows during our community retreat in early June, Abbot John gave each member of Saint John's Abbey the Saint John's Cross engraved with our name, the sesquicentennial dates 1856 and 2006 and these words so dear to every monk:

Sustain me, O Lord, as you have promised
that I may live,
and disappoint me not in my hope.



We monks pray these words at our first and our solemn profession of vows. We rely on the Lord's past promise to sustain us. We want now the abundant life Jesus came to give us. And we hope we will not be disappointed in the future.

Let this be the official Sesquicentennial Prayer of monks and all our readers who are celebrating the past, present and future with us. +



It is always dicey to predict the future

by Abbot John Klassen, OSB

Our Sesquicentennial Anniversary provides an occasion for all of us at Saint John's to contemplate the future as well as to appreciate the good work of so many who helped shape the Saint John's we know. We celebrate a community built and sustained by women and men, monks and laypersons, students and teachers, scholars and crafts persons. It is impossible to predict the future but as Bob Dylan put it, "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows."

With our new Abbey Guesthouse, we will have, for the first time in our history, a facility dedicated to hospitality. The monastic tradition of prayer, silence, stability, contemplation and reflection offers a quiet place of welcome and sanctuary to a society that seems stressed to the breaking point. Bringing this new apostolate into being will be a wonderful challenge.

Saint John's has been blessed with a beautiful natural environment. In a time of rapid development around us, we cannot take the rural character of this area for granted. We will need to work closely with our neighbors to keep it so.

We at Saint John's must constantly renew our commitment to conservation. The cheapest energy is energy not used or wasted. Furthermore, it appears that the era of cheap oil is over. We will contribute to the exploration of alternative energy sources in the context of sensitivity to the planet and our immediate environment.

Saint John's has long been a center for ecumenical research while assisting in the sharing of faith between Christian believers. We will experience an increasingly multi-cultural and multi-faith world that will require spaces and a community for inter-religious dialogue. We need to share with our students and all who come to Saint John's the tools for understanding that enable them to be bridges of hospitality between Christians and those of other faiths.

It is always dicey to predict the future, but there is confidence and stability in our solemn obligation to be mindful of Christ's commandment to love our neighbors in a richly diverse international community and to care for the planet we are blessed to share with the rest of creation. +



Abbey Archives



Angelo's Prep School graduation photo

Angelo Zankl, OSB, Living Link of Saint John's 150 Years

by Peregrine Rinderknecht, OSB

“Although we were but three priests, worked hard throughout the day and had poor fare, choir was never intermitted, even if only two priests were at home. And this exertion, I must confess, did not shorten the life of any of us. Two of us are still alive. Let the rising generation remember that the service of God does not shorten life.”

This quotation of Bruno Riss, OSB (1829-1900), one of the founding monks of Saint John's Abbey, is truer in our time than

it was in his. Indeed, length of life has blessed the monastic community in such a way that our entire Sesquicentennial can be bridged by two monks: Cornelius Wittmann, who arrived from Pennsylvania with Father Bruno, and Angelo Zankl.

This year Father Angelo, at 105, celebrated 85 years of monastic profession and the 80th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. As a novice in 1920-21, he was assigned to accompany Father Cornelius to the oratory

for prayers. Although Cornelius died several months after Angelo's profession of vows, their tenures enclose the entirety of Saint John's long history.

Gerhard Zankl arrived at the Prep School in 1913. As a student he worked in a variety of jobs, including the darkroom of the Saint John's photo studio. He enjoys reminiscing about the monk in charge of the dark-

Hugh Witzmann, OSB



The abbey's beach house designed by Angelo in 1922



Angelo receives a wireless message.

Abbey Archives

room who could always tell which photos were taken by students from North Dakota because they only took pictures of trees! Prior to World War I he assisted Hilary Doerfler, OSB, with experiments in wireless telegraphy. He professes an enduring interest in electronics dating from these early trials.

After graduating from Prep and completing two years in the University, he entered the novitiate and was given the name Angelo. He remains convinced that Abbot Peter Engel gave him the name “Angelo” so that his initials would run from A to Z.

Ordained in 1926, Angelo taught college theology and served as dean of men. He had his hand in a variety of things such as delving into the vi-

In addition to technology and the arts, he enjoyed hunting and fishing. Capitalizing on these pursuits, Abbot Alcuin Deutsch appointed Angelo as the first game warden when the abbey’s lands were designated a state game refuge. One of his early projects was to restock the reserve with deer, a venture that has proved more than successful in the nearly seventy-five years that followed.

In his fifties (not even half of his lifetime!)

Angelo was appointed pastor of Saint Clement’s Parish in Duluth and became port chaplain to the newly opened seaport on Lake Superior when the Saint Lawrence Seaway opened in 1959. The beauty of northern Minnesota and the opportunity to work with a wider spectrum of people expanded his experience of ministry and fulfilled a childhood desire to be near water and boats.

In 1987, at the request of Abbot Jerome Theisen, Angelo moved back to the abbey to “serve as an example for the younger monks.” Nearly twenty years later, he is still gentle and welcoming to everyone who comes to visit, often asking them if he can give them his blessing, which is always delivered in Latin and is accompanied by a translation and a simple explana-



Abbey Archives

Smile! You are on Angelo’s candid camera!

tion. His care for his confreres was confirmed recently when Angelo, who at 105 is rather frail, nevertheless walked his own wheelchair into the room of a dying confrere and stood to give a final blessing and absolution.

The sesquicentennial of Saint John’s has been measured in many ways. Our contributions to society and Church have been noted. Parishes and missions served have been highlighted. A gallery of photos shows how the physical plant has grown from the initial log cabin on the Mississippi to the current campus.

But the story of 150 years is best told in the people who came here and were formed by this place and its way of life, by prayer and life in common. We are blessed to have Father Angelo with us as a welcoming and gentle man, as a link to the beginning of Saint John’s and as a continual witness that Father Bruno was right: “Let the rising generation remember that the service of God does not shorten life.” +

Peregrine Rinderknecht, OSB, completed his year of novitiate and will profess his vows on September 14, 2006.



Abbey Archives

Angelo takes a ride on a typical Minnesota fish.

sual arts and designing coats-of-arms for abbots and bishops as well as the official Seal of the University, still in use. His talent for design blossomed in the lovely stone beach house that has served the monastic community since 1922. His work in both theology and art led to his being asked to serve as the president of the National Catholic Art Association.

Lee Hanley



Archabbot Douglas Nowicki, OSB (center), receives a copy of the Sesquicentennial book and an icon of Saint John the Baptist by Nathanael Hauser, OSB (left). Abbot John is at right.

Saint John's opens Sesquicentennial Celebration on April 5, 2006

"A story that gets better with each re-telling" (Archabbot Douglas Nowicki, OSB)

The founding of Saint John's Abbey 150 years ago is "a story that cannot be told too often. It is our Genesis—a story that gets better with each re-telling and with each passing year" (Archabbot Douglas). The story started April 5, 1856, when five monks of Saint Vincent Abbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, departed for a new mission in Minnesota Territory. The story began to be retold on April 5, 2006, with the opening celebration of Saint John's Sesquicentennial.

This first festivity was set up in the Great Hall of the quadrangle. Around the spacious room were displays of monastic arts and crafts from polyhedrons and pottery to orchids, paintings and bronze sculptures. Collections of early woodworking tools, liturgical vestments and abbey-made furniture along with inexpensive engraved wooden key chains and free Sesquicentennial calendars caught the attention of the inquisitive crowd. Enlarged photographs of early Collegeville places and people were arrayed in the nearby Alumni Lounge.

Brief welcoming speeches were given. Prep School musicians provided a musical background. Four Prep players from their recent "Hello, Dolly!" performance did a delightful song-and-dance routine.

Archabbot Douglas Nowicki, OSB, of Saint Vincent Archabbey, presided and preached at the late afternoon festive Eucharist. Reviewing the early years of Saint John's he asked, "What would Boniface Wimmer say if he were with us at Saint John's today?" He answered the question thus:

"He would probably look around and just say WOW! or in German DA SCHAU HER . . . LOOK AT THAT! And for sure, look at this church we are in, the monastery, the university, the School of Theology•Seminary, the Prep School, the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, the Liturgical Press, the institutes and centers, the foreign missions, the parishes, *Worship* magazine, *The Saint John's Bible* project, the Arboretum . . .

"Boniface Wimmer would quickly add, 'But don't stop now. Forward, always forward, everywhere forward. We cannot be held back by debts, by the difficulties of the times, by unfortunate years. Human adversity is God's opportunity.'"

The celebration concluded with "An Evening to Remember" program in the auditorium. The audience enjoyed the Saint John's Men's Chorus' rendition of "Rock-a My Soul" followed by remarks by Abbot John Klassen and Archabbot Douglas. Hilary Thimmesch, OSB, editor of *Saint John's at 150: A portrait of this place called Collegeville*, introduced the official Sesquicentennial book. Several of its authors spoke about their contribution. The program closed with a video by Simon-Hoa Phan, OSB: *Saint John's: The People, the Place, the Story*.

Refreshments after the program included the new Sesquicentennial Cookie, a dark chocolate creation drizzled with white frosting. One celebration down. Only a dozen more to go. +

Saint Vincent Archives



The original monastic building of Saint Vincent Abbey



Abbey Archives

Archabbot Boniface Wimmer, OSB

Bronze statue of Boniface Wimmer in front of the Saint Vincent Archabbey church (left)

The campus of Saint Vincent Archabbey, Seminary and College (below)

The Saint Vincent Archabbey church (right)



Abbey Archives

Saint Vincent Seminary

Lee Hanley



Magnus Wenninger, OSB, and his polyhedrons displayed at the opening Sesquicentennial Celebration



An angel's eye view of several displays in the Great Hall

Lee Hanley



Lee Hanley

Abbot John (l.) visits with Bishop Richard Pates and unidentified visitor.

We celebrate the monks' arrival in Minnesota on May 2, 1856

"A relationship was built on warmth, friendship, mutual respect and unfailing commitment to a common mission" (Bishop Richard Pates).

“Minnesota Landing,” the second major Sesquicentennial celebration of Saint John’s, was held at the Church of the Assumption in downtown St. Paul on April 30, 2006. The occasion honored the arrival of the five pioneer Benedictines at St. Paul on May 2, 1856.

It was appropriate to gather at Assumption Church for this occasion. The original structure was built by Father George Keller, the only German priest in the diocese, for his congregation of German immigrants. The parish was given to the Benedictines who ministered there until 1912 and built the present twin-towered structure that came to be known as “The German Cathedral of the Northwest.” Among its parishioners were Alcuin Deutsch, OSB, fifth abbot of Saint John’s, and Virgil Michel, OSB, pioneer of the liturgical movement in the United States.

A social hour for area Oblates, friends and a busload of monks was

followed by a Solemn Vesper Service with Bishop Richard Pates, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Abbot John and Father Stephen O’Gara, associate pastor of Assumption Church, presiding. The music of the psalms and three Mozart hymns were performed by the Abbey Schola, the CSB/SJU Chamber Choir and the Amadeus Chamber Orchestra with Patricia Kent of the College of Saint Benedict as soprano soloist.

In his homily Bishop Pates summarized the arrival of the Benedictines and their brief stay with Bishop Cretin who ordained Cornelius Wittmann, OSB, and Bruno Riss, OSB, before their departure for St. Cloud on May 19. He recalled the warm spring day when Brother Patrick Greil, OSB, who did not have any beer at hand, drank too much water and became ill. Thereafter the beer supply never again ran short. The bishop continued:

“Father di Marogna, leader of the monks, and Bishop Cretin forged a relationship that has flourished to this day. We are familiar with how

Saint John’s Abbey has prospered. Its monks and associated community have contributed significantly for fifteen decades to the spiritual, religious, contemplative, theological, liturgical, cultural, agricultural, environmental and social communication network of our state community. Our state would not so beautifully reflect the best of God’s creative hand without the Benedictine presence.

“The crown jewel of the monks is Saint John’s University, which they serve in tandem with the Sisters of Saint Benedict and the College of Saint Benedict. I am sure that Bishop Cretin and Father di Marogna never envisioned the football powerhouse that eventually emerged from the seeds they were planting, much to the eventual consternation of the likes of the University of Saint Thomas.

“Tonight we express heartfelt thanks for a history of 150 years that had humble, uncertain and tentative beginnings but are evidence now that God’s Providence continues unabated and even abundantly so in our midst.” +



Richard Oliver, OSB

A statue of Saint Benedict above a side altar of the Church of the Assumption



Lee Hanley

The celebration of Solemn Vespers in the Church of the Assumption



Richard Oliver, OSB

The twin-towered Church of the Assumption in downtown St. Paul, Minnesota



Lee Hanley

Axel Theimer directs the CSB/SJU Chamber Choir and Orchestra.



Abbot John and Bishop John Kinney

Lee Hanley

“St. Cloud or Bust! — We made it there on May 20, 1856”

“To find St. Cloud was a rather difficult task, comprising as it did one house and four less dignified edifices and these far apart”
(Bruno Riss, OSB).

The pioneer Benedictines’ initial trip from St. Paul to St. Cloud took two mosquito-ridden days and a night on the H. M. Rice steamship. In the afternoon of May 20, 1856, a landing was made near St. Cloud and by evening the little band and their baggage entered the village.

To honor that occasion the third festivity of Saint John’s Sesquicentennial, “Family Fun Day,” was held May 20, 2006. The emphasis was on the Benedictine commitment to community and gratitude to our neighbors, Benedictine parishioners and friends.

The chilly, rainy morning was not much fun, but the clouds eventually broke and the crowd grew. An amazing assortment of activities offered enjoyment for all ages. Jugglers and a stilt walker directed parents and children to a petting zoo, historical displays, Bingo and food vendors. Tours were given of buildings from the Abbey Church to the pottery studio.

There was music, music, music: the um-pah-pah of Jerry’s Concertina

Band, rhythms of Cyril Paul’s Caribbean Combo, Blue Grass melodies of the Blue Drifters, contemporary tunes of the Collegeville Station, stirring songs by a mariachi band, haunting Celtic music of Pipers Crow, the Native American drummers and P-town Singers, a roaming accordionist and the awesome performance of the Mu Daiku Japanese drummers.

Willie’s Pub in Sexton Commons was the scene of Abbot John’s blessing of “Ole Johnnie Ale,” a Sesquicentennial beer brewed by the Gluek Brewing Company of Cold Spring, Minnesota. The blessing was taken from St. Brigid’s Rule of the fifth century: “I should like a great lake of finest ale. / I should welcome the poor to my feast. / Let the ale be made from the fruits of the earth. / God bless our human race.”

Bishop John Kinney of the St. Cloud Diocese presided and preached at the Eucharist for the Sixth Sunday of Easter. Commenting on the reading of John’s Gospel where Jesus says, “As the Father has loved me, so have

I loved you,” the bishop said, “This is the great truth we celebrate every day in our lives and in the Church: God loves us!”

He added his gratitude for “all the gifts the Benedictine monks have given to us, pastoral, formational, liturgical, ecumenical, academic, spiritual, scriptural, environmental—enormous gifts. I especially thank God that for 150 years at regular appointed hours each day the Divine Office, the ‘Work of God,’ has been prayed in this diocese.”

The festival concluded with two evening concerts by John McCutcheon, favorite performer during the two decades of the memorable Swayed Pines Festival. John lived up to the praise of Johnny Cash who called McCutcheon “the most impressive instrumentalist I ever heard.” +

1. A stilted juggler welcomes the "Family Fun Day" crowd.
2. John McCutcheon in concert
3. The Flor y Canto Mariachi
4. The Mu Daiku Japanese Drummers
5. Caribbean friends: Herard Jean-Noel, OSB,I. (Haiti) and Cyril Paul (Trinidad)
6. Br. Peregrine sells cotton candy.
7. A horse-drawn carriage offers campus tours.

photos by Lee Hanley and David Paul Lange, OSB





Abbot Wolfgang Hagl, OSB, of Metten preaches at Mass on the Feast of Saint John the Baptist.

We celebrate the Feast of our patron, Saint John the Baptist, on June 23-24, 2006

“Saint Benedict built a chapel in honor of Saint John the Baptist”
(Life and Miracles of Saint Benedict).

In memory of the dedication to Saint John the Baptist of Saint Benedict’s first chapel on Monte Cassino, our pioneer monks dedicated the chapel of their monastery in St. Cloud to the forerunner of Jesus on June 24, 1856. Bruno Riss, OSB, caught the spirit of the occasion when he said, “As the tidings of salvation were first preached from the banks of the Jordan, now they were to spread westward from the banks of the Mississippi.”

The Sesquicentennial Celebration of the Feast of Saint John the Baptist began with Solemn Evening Prayer on June 23, presided by Abbots John Klassen and Wolfgang Maria Hagl of the Abbey of Saint Michael, Metten, Bavaria. The towering bronze sculpture of the Baptist by Doris Caesar was moved from the Abbey Church baptistery to a place of honor in the sanctuary.

A special feature of the service was the reading of three poems, in the voices of Zechariah, the Archangel Gabriel and Elizabeth, by Susan Sink, editor/writer at Liturgical Press, after

each chanted psalm. The service concluded with a rousing English/German rendition of “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name”/Grosser Gott, wir loben dich!”

After a buffet dinner for guests and monks, a program of music, a video and several short talks was presented. The video, “The People and Places of Saint John’s,” was produced by Simon-Hoa Phan, OSB. Robert Koopmann, OSB, played segments of a new CD, “Voices from Saint John’s: A Sesquicentennial Sampler,” recordings of various Collegeville choral groups from 1940 to the present, published by Liturgical Press.

Abbot Wolfgang was the chief concelebrant and preacher at the Eucharistic celebration on June 24. He wished Saint John’s a happy 150th birthday from the Metten community from which Boniface Wimmer came in 1846 to establish Benedictine life in America. The abbot good naturedly asked, “What do 150 years mean when we compare them to the history of Metten which goes back almost 1250 years in time?” He likened Saint

John’s to the “granddaughter” of this old Bavarian abbey and urged the community to “continue the dedication to God and the work which for 150 years has been assigned to the monks of this place.”

After reviewing the life and work of Wimmer, Abbot Wolfgang concluded, “I wish you success in mastering the future by connecting the reliable monastic values with the traditional American virtues such as optimism, or better, faithful realism, the spirit of the pioneers, confidence and self-reliance which are the envy of us Europeans. God bless you and may the Lord guide you into a good future!”

Nancy Bauer, OSB, prioress of the Monastery of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota, concluded the Mass with congratulations from our sister community (see p. 14). +



Alan Reed, OSB

The bronze sculpture of Saint John the Baptist by Doris Caesar



Abbey Archives

The church of the Abbey of Saint Michael in Metten, Bavaria



Abbey Archives

The Abbey of Saint Michael, Metten, Bavaria

Prioress Nancy Bauer, OSB



Ssaint Benedict's Monastery

Sisters of Saint Benedict's Monastery congratulate their brother monks

by Nancy Bauer, OSB

It is an honor for me to extend to all the monks of Saint John's Abbey the congratulations of all the sisters of Saint Benedict's Monastery on the occasion of the Sesquicentennial of the abbey and university.

In early April you heard from the archabbot of Saint Vincent Archabbey, your *mother* monastery. In late June you heard from the abbot of Metten in Bavaria, your *grandmother* monastery. Since we have this matriarchal system going here, it is appropriate that I represent your *sister* monastery.

Our histories have been intertwined since the beginning. In an August 12, 1857 letter to Abbot Boniface Wimmer, Alexius Roetzer wrote, "As soon as one trouble is over, another shows up. Now the sisters have come."

I understand that Father Alexius returned to Saint Vincent a short time later. But we sisters are still here to celebrate your fidelity to our common heritage: the living of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the *Rule of Saint Benedict*.

We are monks and nuns, the masculine and feminine expressions of monasticism in the New World. We are companions on a journey of seeking God and serving the people of God. Many family names on your membership list match names on ours: Gerten, Weber, Primus, Maiers, Reed, Marx, to mention a few.

In the early years, we established missions together—White Earth in the 1870s and Red Lake in the 1880s—and parishes and schools among the immigrants in Central Minnesota. We did your laundry. You did our sacraments.

There have been lights and shadows in our 150-year relationship. Abbot Wimmer holds a different place in your hearts than in ours. There are good memories and old wounds. There has been collaboration and consternation. But there have also been deep spiritual friendships as we work together for the good of the Church, and mutual assistance.

This is a new beginning, a time to recall the past and celebrate what-

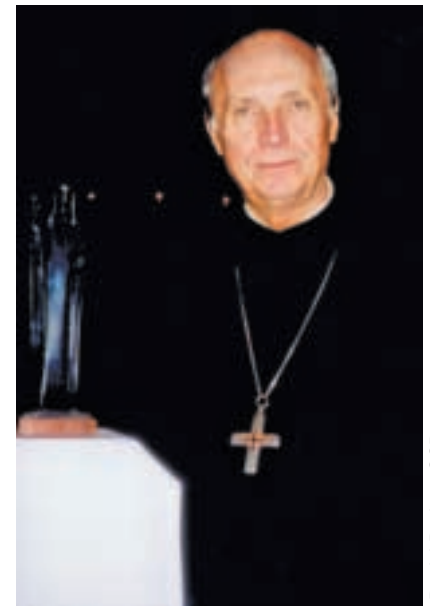
ever merits celebrating and reconcile whatever needs reconciling. But more importantly, it is a time to turn toward the future.

We began our first 150 years in an unequal partnership, with the sisters being subject to the abbot in many ways. We begin our second 150 years as equal partners, co-creators of the Kingdom of God. I would rather dream of the possibilities for the future than dwell on the problems of the past.

I hope for a future of greater collaboration and communion between our two communities. I see our newest members as the catalyst and life force of this movement. I predict for our bicentennial celebrations in 2056 that Saint John's Abbey and Saint Benedict's Monastery will achieve a new model of partnership between men's and women's monasteries. Together we can do marvelous things. +

Nancy Bauer is the prioress of Saint Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, Minnesota.

Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, OSB, with the Pax Christi statue of Saint Benedict



Daniel Durken, OSB

Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, OSB, considers the challenge for Benedictines in the years ahead

translated by Mark Thamert, OSB

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from an interview with Notker Wolf, OSB, Abbot Primate and titular head of Benedictine men and women throughout the world, during his visit at Saint John's Abbey in early July, 2006.

When I am asked, "What is the challenge for Benedictines throughout the world in the years ahead? What special role do Benedictines play?" I would say we have a big chance to witness to the presence of God in our world through our prayer, community and work.

While praying with the Saint John's community last night, I looked around and thought, "Isn't this amazing—this

group of men praying here, living together here? How creative such a group is and what a great life this is in spite of all the problems you may have in your community. God uses us as witnesses in spite of our weaknesses so we won't become proud of ourselves."

Put a bunch of men or women together and you have a power station. There is so much possibility, so much creativity which we don't find any other place in the world. The real witness is God, not we who are just doing our work and sometimes in a stupid way. Nevertheless, God loves us.

The fact that we commit ourselves as monks to this one group of people for the rest of our lives has a special power to it, the power of staying together as a family. Bishops are looking for Benedictine foundations because they say the Church needs this kind of contemplative element. Usually they see us only

as contemplatives. But I always say, no, we are first of all a community, not just individuals. The Christian dimension is the *ecclesial* dimension and that means community, living together.

To young men and women who are thinking about religious life I would like to say, "Come and see and have the courage to say Yes!" It is so beautiful. For me the monastic life has opened up dimensions in my life which I would never have seen. To live in community, to live for God is to be always living beyond oneself, doing and being more than you ever thought you would or could do or be.

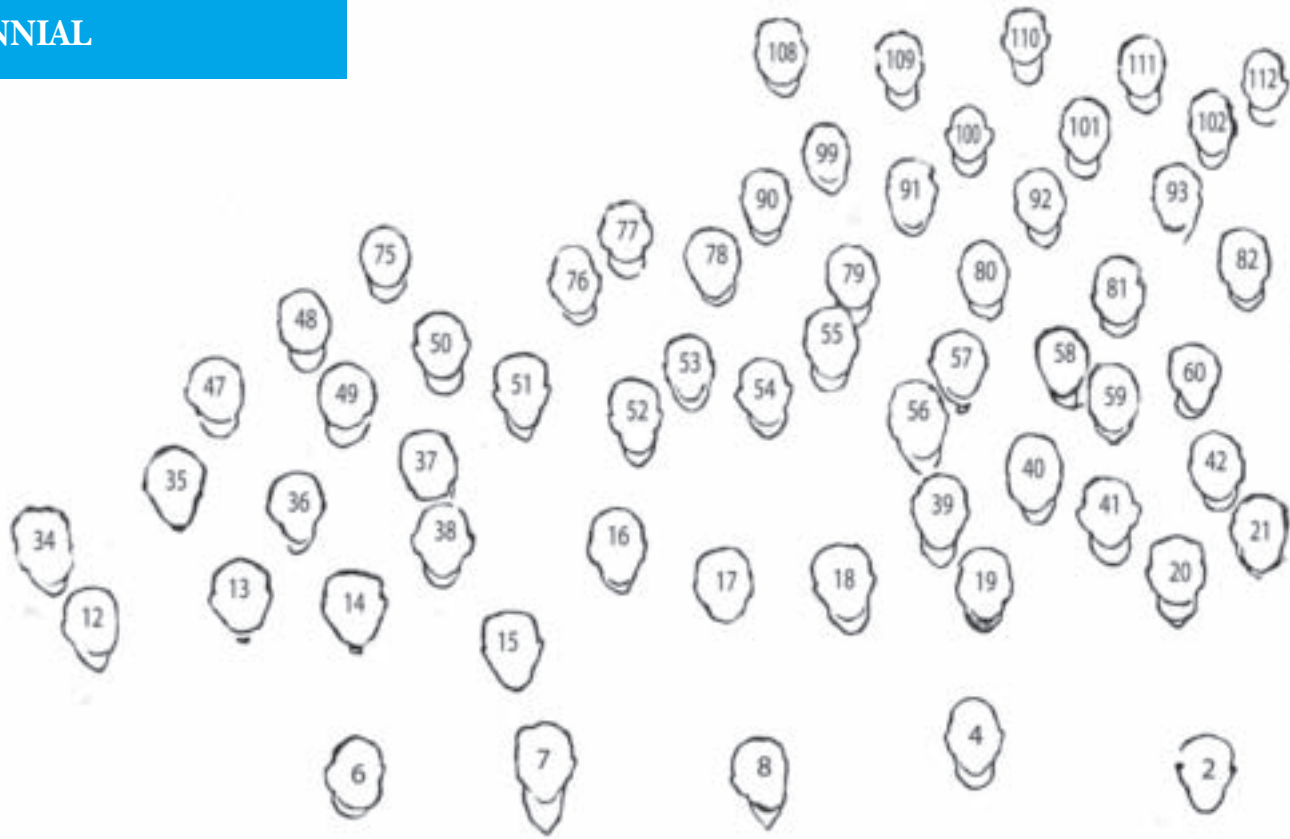
I think it's a special vocation to be in a monastic community because it is never closed. It's like the people of Israel going through the desert with Moses. We always have the Promised Land in front of us. We are never finished as there is room for lots of ideas. Benedictines have no ideologies and are not made for some special purpose. We just walk and praise the Lord and go with others. It is worthwhile to have the courage to say Yes! +

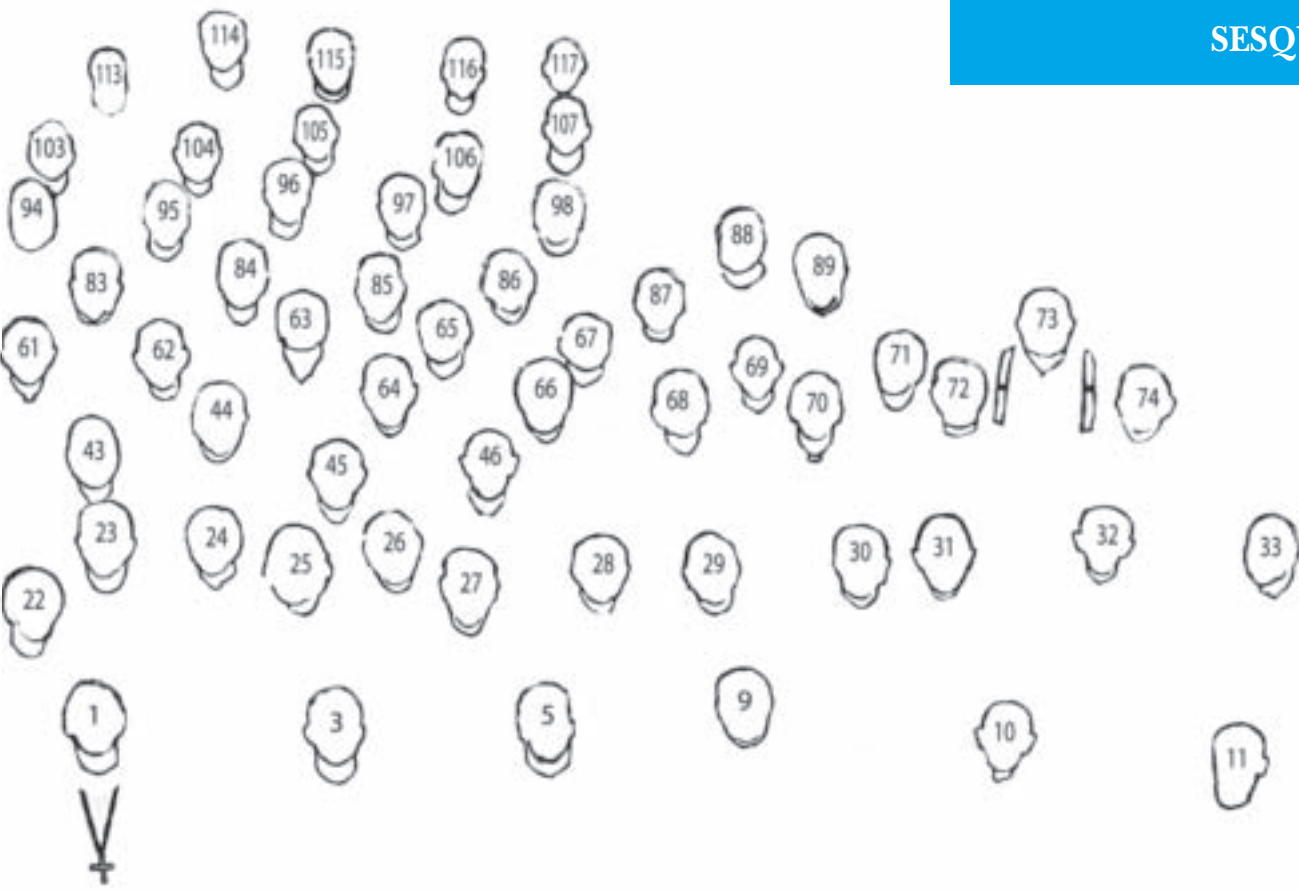
Mark Thamert, OSB, the translator, is associate professor of German at Saint John's University.



Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, OSB, plays the flute at a concert following the presentation of the Pax Christi Award.

Hugh Witzmann, OSB







THE SESQUICENTENNIAL MONKS OF SAINT JOHN'S ABBEY

1. Abbot John Klassen
2. Raymond Pedrizetti
3. Paul Richards
4. John Patrick Earls
5. Benedict Leuthner
6. Andre Bennett
7. Richard Eckroth
8. Philip Kaufman
9. Vincent Tegeder
10. Angelo Zankl
11. Gregory Sebastian (deceased)
12. Don LeMay
13. Stanley Roche
14. Landelin Robling (deceased)
15. Florian Muggli
16. Daniel Durken
17. Arnold Weber
18. Luke Dowal
19. Kilian McDonnell
20. Barnabas Laubach
21. Gregory Eibensteiner
22. Chrysostom Kim
23. Simon Bischof
24. Urban Pieper
25. Fintan Bromenshenkel
26. Luke Steiner
27. Magnus Wenninger
28. John Kulas
29. Burton Bloms
30. Gordon Tavis
31. Francis Peters
32. George Wolf
33. Allen Tarlton
34. Raphael Olson
35. Mathias Spier
36. George Primus
37. Alberic Culhane
38. Don Talafous
39. Knute Anderson
40. Andrew Goltz
41. Michael Laux
42. Martin Rath
43. John Patrick McDarby
44. Jonathan Fischer
45. Hilary Thimmesch
46. Finian McDonald
47. Bruce Wollmering

48. Alan Reed
49. Brennan Maiers
50. Kelly Ryan
51. Abbot Timothy Kelly
52. Cletus Connors
53. Julius Beckermann
54. Simeon Thole
55. Joel Kelly
56. Julian Schmiesing
57. James Tingerthal
58. Thomas Gillespie
59. Roger Botz
60. Dale Launderville
61. Roger Klassen
62. Meinrad Dindorf
63. Paul Fitt
64. Rene McGraw
65. Blane Wasnie
66. Thomas Thole
67. Otto Thole
68. Jerome Coller
69. Paul Jasmer
70. Corwin Collins
71. David Manahan
72. Hugh Witzmann
73. Alexander Andrews
74. Wilfred Theisen
75. Eric Hollas
76. Walter Kieffer
77. Don Tauscher
78. Jim Phillips
79. Geoffrey Fecht
80. Michael Patella
81. Jonathan Licari
82. Kevin Seasoltz
83. Dunstan Moorse
84. Robert Koopmann
85. Linus Ascheman
86. Damian Rogers
87. Michael Kwatera
88. Timothy Backous
89. Stephen Beauclair
90. Richard Oliver
91. Nathanael Hauser
92. Doug Mullin
93. Robert Pierson
94. John Hanson

95. Kevin Ludowese
96. Kenneth Kroeker
97. Columba Stewart
98. Neal Laloo
99. Michael Bik
100. Peter Sullivan
101. Anthony Ruff
102. John Bede Pauley
103. Gregory Miller
104. Xavier Schermerhorn
105. Cyril Gorman
106. Simon-Hoa Phan
107. David Paul Lange
108. Zachary Wilberding
109. John Brudney
110. Bradley Jenniges
111. Matthew Luft
112. Paul-Vincent Niebauer
113. Herard Jean-Noel
114. Joseph Feders
115. Christopher Fair
116. Joseph Schneeweis
117. Andrew Coval

MONKS NOT PICTURED:

William Borgerding, Edwin Stueber, Paul Marx, Bartholomew Sayles, Placid Stuckenschneider, Samuel Lickteig, Thomas Wahl, James Reichert, Eugene McGlothlin, Kieran Nolan, Roger Kasprick, Henry Bryan Hayes, Nicholas Thelen, William Skudlarek, Michael Naughton, Roman Paur, Mark Kelly, Mel Taylor, Jerome Tupa, Daniel Ward, Dominic Ruiz, Cyprian Weaver, Thomas Andert, Dietrich Reinhart, Francis Hoefgen, Ian Dommer, Francisco Schulte, Isaac Connolly, Mark Thamert, John Kelly, Robin Pierzina, Luke Mancuso, Dennis Beach, Peter Kawamura, Luigi Bertocchi, William Schipper, Jeffrey Hutson, Edward Vebelun, Paul Makoto Tada, Isidore Glycer, Peregrine Rinderknecht

Photo by Jack Ludwig, Ludwig Photography, Albany, Minnesota

Abbot Wolfgang Hagl, OSB, of Metten, Bavaria, reflects on his Sesquicentennial visit to Saint John's (Part I)

translated by Mark Thamert, OSB



Hugh Witzmann, OSB

This is my second visit to Saint John's. My first was in connection with a visit to the grave of Bernard Strasser, OSB, in Norfolk, Nebraska. Father Bernard was a Metten monk who taught at Saint John's for many years after he fled the dangers of Nazi Germany.

What impresses me each time I visit America is the unbelievable amount of space. There is all the room anyone could possibly want—lakes, forests and fertile soil. Benedictines are bound closely to the earth just like our neighbors with whom we live. The Abbey of Metten was founded in 760 so for over 1200 years we, too, have close ties with our neighbors. This neighborhood connection is one of the most striking characteristics of our Order.

Confreres here are proud of Saint John's and that gives me a very good feeling. We should not be afraid of having our problems in community. That belongs to our lives as human beings. The essential element of

Christian living is to be grounded in forgiveness. How can we Benedictines be a model of healthy and wise relationships for the families who live around us? This is the great challenge of our time.

America is very young. This gives me an impression of vigorous youthfulness. Problems are not so much great catastrophes, but rather challenges. You are happy to accept challenges and move forward. This is the positive way of thinking combined with the old monastic virtues. I really feel the spirit of the pioneers here. Traditions are beautiful but they can also be a heavy load. Here you are much freer with your relationship to tradition. There is also an unbelievable amount of building activity at Saint John's. You show a childlike trust in the future.

There are differences in the way European and Saint John's monks live their daily lives. In Metten we have self-service only at breakfast; otherwise our meals are all served family

style. There is a cultural background to this practice in Europe where more emphasis is placed on form, and I would like to hold fast to these practices.

I especially like the deliberate pace of your prayers of the Divine Office with the one-minute pauses between the psalms. You pray fewer psalms than we do. You follow the four-week psalter (150 psalms) like the diocesan priests whereas we complete the psalter in two weeks. Here everything happens a bit later in the day. We rise at 4:30 a.m. and since I am a morning person I like our schedule very much. Here I am on vacation so I enjoy your later times. +

Abbot Wolfgang will continue his reflections in future issues of The Abbey Banner. Mark Thamert, OSB, teaches German at Saint John's University.

Eighteen monks celebrate significant jubilees

MONASTIC PROFESSION

85 YEARS



Angelo Zankl, OSB

This issue's cover story features the Saint John's Abbey (almost) Sesquicentennial Monk, pp. 4-5. At 105 Father

Angelo is the last living link with one of the abbey's founding pioneers, Cornelius Wittmann, OSB.



Arnold Weber, OSB

The abbey's first vocation director and founder of the summer leadership camps at Saint John's, Father Arnold was also the

pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Medina, Minnesota. During his twenty-three year there the community grew from 350 to 2,700 families.

legal cases involving monks have meant a varied and busy half-century of service for Father Rene.



Simeon Thole, OSB

Father Simeon's ministry has included teaching English at the Prep School, the chaplaincy of Benedictine women in

Crookston, Minnesota, the pastorate of the Collegeville Parish, administrator of Saint Leo's Abbey, Florida, and now assistant director of the Spiritual Life Program.

75 YEARS



Vincent Tegeder, OSB

Approaching his ninety-sixth birthday in October, Father Vincent enjoyed forty-four years of teaching history at Saint John's

with a special interest in the Civil War. He worked in the abbey and university archives for more than two decades.



Barnabas Laubach, OSB

Father Barnabas' ministry as director of the Pastoral Care Department of St. Bernardine Hospital, San Bernardino,

California, was preceded by pastoral duties in several Minnesota parishes and the chaplaincy of the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Saint Cloud, Minnesota.



Finian McDonald, OSB

Dean of men, faculty resident in campus student housing, director of counseling, director of academic advising, missionary

60 YEARS



Landelin Robling, OSB

Parishes in Minnesota and a monastery, school and parish in Puerto Rico where he served for twenty-one years were the places

of Father Landelin's priestly ministry. He then served as the abbey's guestmaster until his death on July 15, 2006.



Kilian McDonnell, OSB

Best known for his founding the Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research, his leadership in the

charismatic movement, his authorship of a dozen theology books and his world-wide travels, Father Kilian has also published several small volumes of his poetry.

monk at our communities in Japan and the Bahamas, head community barber, cultivator of orchids and assistant sacristan—such assignments have kept Father Finian busy.



Richard Eckroth, OSB

Teaching philosophy, instructing the Brothers of the community, taking care of the abbey's stamp and coin collections, making the

community's wine and serving in parishes in Minnesota and the Bahamas were some of Father Richard's assignments.



Rene McGraw, OSB

Teaching philosophy and peace studies, serving as the abbey's formation director, living

in campus student housing as a faculty resident and being the abbey's liaison for



Otto Thole, OSB

Brother Otto worked in the print shop, plumbing and heating department, university language lab, audio-visual department of Liturgical Press, and

as a firemonk and Prep School prefect. He labored for thirteen years at San Antonio Abad Abbey in Puerto Rico and is now the abbey's assistant physical therapist.

PRIESTHOOD ORDINATION

80 YEARS

Angelo Zankl, OSB



Our Sesquicentennial Monk celebrates two jubilees this year: the 85th anniversary of his first profession as a Benedictine monk and the 80th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

60 YEARS



Edwin Stueber, OSB

Filling his retirement days with the study of Hebrew, Greek and Russian and the enjoyment of classical music, Father Edwin

served for thirty-seven years in Minnesota and New York parishes and was also the chaplain at hospitals in Duluth and South Saint Paul.

50 YEARS



Wilfred Theisen, OSB

Retired after a half-century of teaching physics, history of science and honors, Father Wilfred has also served as associate director of the Hill

Museum & Manuscript Library. He is the liaison of the Collegeville Ecumenical Institute, writes "Homily Hints" for Liturgical Press and occasionally plays golf.



Daniel Durken, OSB

Father Daniel has been professor of theology, novice master, abbey personnel director and publicist, director and editor/writer of Liturgical

Press, lecturer on the Bible in area parishes and the Bahamas and weekend pastoral assistant. He is the founding editor of *The Abbey Banner*.



Knute Anderson, OSB

Teaching mathematics, Greek and Latin, serving as an associate pastor and convent chaplain and working as a translator,

cataloger and research associate at the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library have been Father Knute's past assignments. He now faithfully distributes the community's daily mail.



Luke Steiner, OSB

Before taking up his first full-time parish assignment two years ago as pastor of St. Augustine's Church in St. Cloud, Father Luke taught New

Testament Scripture courses at Saint John's School of Theology•Seminary, directed the Jerusalem Study Program and served as rector of the seminary.



Kevin Seasoltz, OSB

Ordained for the Diocese of Aloma-Johnson, Pennsylvania, and later beginning his monastic life at St. Anselm's

Abbey, Washington, D.C., Father Kevin transferred his vows to Saint John's Abbey in 1987. He is the general editor of *Worship* magazine and professor of theology at Saint John's School of Theology•Seminary.

25 YEARS



Robert Koopmann, OSB

As organist and director of music for the abbey, Father Robert schedules organists and cantors for Masses and the Liturgy of

the Hours. He is the university's professor of music and a faculty resident in campus student housing. He gives piano concerts throughout the States, Bahamas, Europe and Africa and has recorded three CDs.

Priesthood jubilarians were recognized by Abbot John and blessed by their monastic brothers at the celebration of the Eucharist on June 8 during the community retreat.

Monastic profession jubilarians renewed their vows and were honored on the Feast of Saint Benedict, July 11. +

Lee Hanley



Abbey Guesthouse and Pavilion will be dedicated October 21-22, 2006

by Geoffrey Fecht, OSB

Please join us for this long-awaited celebration.

After years of praying, planning and preparing, the new Abbey Guesthouse and Petters Church Pavilion will open its doors for guests and visitors this fall. The monastery will hold the formal blessing and dedication of this long-held dream of Saint John's Abbey on Saturday and Sunday, October 21-22.

join the monastic community for this long-awaited celebration and important moment in the history of Saint John's Abbey.

You are also invited to come and enjoy the quiet and solitude as well as the Benedictine hospitality of this new facility. Located on beautiful Lake

Walk-through tours of the new facilities will be held from 11a.m. - 5 p.m. on Saturday and from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Sunday. The newly renovated Blessed Sacrament Chapel in the Abbey Church will be blessed during the 10:30 a.m. Sunday Eucharistic liturgy. The formal blessing and dedication of the Abbey Guesthouse and Petters Pavilion will take place at 4 p.m. on Sunday, followed by Evening Prayer in the Abbey Church and a reception. You are invited to



The architect's scale model of the garden area of the new Abbey Guesthouse.

Vincent James Associates Architects

Sagatagan amidst the woodlands, prairies and wetlands of Saint John's campus, the Abbey Guesthouse has thirty guest rooms (including four suites), a meditation chapel, a library, several meeting rooms, a dining room and parlors for visiting and spiritual direction. Besides tending to guests' housing and meals, the staff will be available to assist with guests' spiritual needs.

To give the Guesthouse staff sufficient time for training and for the complete preparation of the building's facilities, reservations will not be taken until December 1, 2006.

Commenting on the purpose of the new buildings, Abbot John says, "The Guesthouse will provide a meeting place for those who have a spiritual hunger. Our monastic tradition of prayer, silence, stability, contemplation and reflection offers a quiet place of welcome and sanctuary to a society that seems stressed to the breaking point. The Petters Pavilion will give greater prominence to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel in the Abbey Church, access to the Chapter House for programs, lobby space and rooms for wedding preparations."

The Abbey Guesthouse, however, is not a hotel. Rather, it is intended to be a quiet, simple place for people who want to share the prayer life of the monastery and the peace and tranquility of the sacred place known as Saint John's.



An early July photo of the tunnel link between the Petters Pavilion and the Abbey Guesthouse

To further the Abbey's mission, the monks invite parents of students, alumni, friends of Saint John's and people of all faiths to enjoy our monastic hospitality and experience spiritual renewal by staying for a time in our new Guesthouse.

To make a reservation for a stay, please call 320-363-2573, or e-mail: Guestmaster@osb.org. You may follow the Guesthouse construction progress by checking the live webcam at <http://guesthousecam.saintjohnsabey.org/> +

A guesthouse endowment fund is created for program support

In order to make the Guesthouse affordable to all comers, we hope to endow the positions of guestmaster, oblate director and spiritual life director. Endowing the program will help keep the overall costs down and thereby permit lower fees for retreatants, student groups, guest and others who wish to use the Guesthouse.

Abbey Development, P. O. Box 2015, Collegeville, Minnesota 56321 or by email at sjabbeydev@osb.org or phone 320-363-3818. +

Geoffrey Fecht is the director of abbey development at Saint John's.

Please consider contributing to this fund by either a planned gift or a donation. To make such a gift or for more information please contact Fr. Geoffrey Fecht, OSB, Director of



Participants of the summer 2006 Monastic Experience Program: l. to r., Adam Vrooman, Paul-Vincent Niebauer, OSB, (director) Doug Sankey, John Oshel, Luke Schleif and Ben Leist

There are many ways to experience life within the cloister

by Paul-Vincent Niebauer, OSB

Experiences run from an overnight to a month-long program.

We would never think of purchasing an expensive suit without trying it on or a new car without test-driving it first. Nor do we expect a young man to enter the monastery without first getting to know what community life is like within the cloister.

The first step in this process is for the interested party to submit an *Application for a First Visit*, including at least two references, to the vocation office. If the application is accepted, the young man is invited to visit the abbey. Often the visit is coordinated with two or three other applicants.

There are several opportunities for young men to continue the discernment process of eventually working and praying with our monastic community. For example:

At least two three-day live-ins are scheduled yearly. These programs begin at the Friday afternoon five o'clock community Mass and conclude after noon dinner on Sunday.

The abbey annually hosts a more structured and focused Holy Week Triduum and Easter retreat that begins on Wednesday of Holy Week and concludes after Easter Sunday dinner.

Students of Saint John's University are especially invited to attend any of the above retreats. The abbey also hosts at least one *Monastic Plunge* each semester: an overnight opportunity that gives students a taste of monastic life without giving up an entire weekend. Students have many opportunities to experience life behind the cloister walls.

For young men wanting a deeper sense of the rhythm of monastic life, the abbey offers the annual summer-time *Monastic Experience Program* from June 16 to July 13. The Monastic Experience Participants (MEPS) have a forty-five minute weekday class on subjects such as monastic history, public and private prayer and the *Rule of Saint Benedict*.

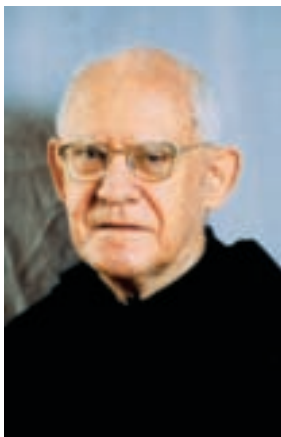
MEPS work two hours each morning and afternoon, helping in the

gardens, the woodworking shop and the woods and assisting with tasks inside the cloister. In the evening MEPS have an informal get-together with a monk who is invited to share the story of his particular monastic journey.

The MEPS program includes the celebrations of Independence Day and the Feast of Saint Benedict (July 11). MEPS join the community at play with traditional July 4th canoe races, a water balloon toss and a vigorous volleyball game. On July 11 they share the rich spirituality of one of the greatest Benedictine feast days.

Inevitably there are those who cannot come for any of the above opportunities. Then the vocation director simply schedules the young man on dates that are mutually agreeable. If the visitor comes a great distance, a longer visit than three days is often scheduled. +

Paul-Vincent Niebauer, OSB, is the abbey's vocation director at vocations@osb.org or call 320-363-2548.



David Manahan, OSB

**Mark Henry Schneider, OSB
1914 - 2006**

Father Mark’s boyhood desire to be a circus performer doing cart-wheels was eventually transformed into a vocation to the monastic life and the priesthood. Yet it can be said of our confrere, “You can take the boy out of the circus but you can’t take the circus out of the boy.”

Mark’s gifts of playfulness, storytelling, mimicking, violin playing and singing his favorite songs—“The White Cliffs of Dover” and the Notre Dame Fight Song—often gave a circus quality to his conversations and made him a beloved and popular community member.

The fifth of the twelve children of Henry and Blanche (Taylor) Schneider of Rice Lake, Wisconsin, Mark came to Saint John’s Prep School in 1928. After two years in the university he entered the abbey in 1934 and was ordained in 1941.

Even before his ordination Mark taught Latin in the Prep School and continued to do so for twenty-five years. He received the master’s degree in that language from Notre Dame. Of his graduate school experience this diminutive monk humbly confessed, “I did not play on the first string of the Notre Dame football team.”

Mark was an animated instructor who taught in front of his desk, on top of his desk and under his desk. He organized a Latin conversation club for his students, also taught religion, was a prefect of students and served as the school’s chaplain for sixteen years.



Abbey Archives

Father Mark plays his violin.

His second career began in 1966 when he became chaplain for the ill and the elderly. Mark served at hospitals and nursing homes in Duluth, Detroit Lakes and Cold Spring for the next thirty-one years. When he retired to Saint Raphael’s Hall in the abbey in 1997 he continued to amuse and entertain residents and staff with his delightful stories and impersonations that never grew tiresome from repetition.

When the monastic community commemorated the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Jesus on Pentecost, June 4, Mark—ever a faithful follower of Jesus—was swept up into the light and warmth of the flame of God’s glory by the same Holy Spirit. May he rest in peace. +



Abbey Archives

The four brothers of Father Mark served his First Mass on June 12, 1941, in Rice Lake, Wisconsin, l.to r., George, Leo, Mark, Paul, Dan.



David Manahan, OSB

**Gregory Harry Sebastian, OSB
1920 – 2006**

The only child of Harry and Catherine (Nelles) Sebastian, Harry attended a Chicago parochial grade school and a public high school. Reading, taking care of his tropical fish, working as a Boy Scout messenger at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933, being involved in the Church's Catholic Action program and serving as president of the Student Council made him a busy young man.

The example of his cousin Delphine's entrance into the Sisters of Christian Charity and his attendance at a summer school of Catholic Action prompted Harry to consider a vocation to the priesthood. He studied Latin at Saint John's University and was sufficiently impressed by the monks and their praying the Divine Office to seek entrance into the abbey's novitiate in 1941. He left the novitiate and did a three-year stint in the Army during World War II.

After the war, Harry pursued studies in English, taught that subject at several universities and received the doctorate from Columbia University in 1970. His interest in medieval and renaissance manuscripts impelled him to seek employment as a cataloger for the Hill Monastic Microfilm Library at Saint John's in 1973.

Harry re-entered the novitiate in his late fifties, received the name Gregory, completed the Master of Divinity degree from Saint John's School of Theology•Seminary and was ordained

to the priesthood in 1983. He served as chaplain to the Benedictine Sisters of Saint Raphael's Convent in St. Cloud for five years and worked as the cataloger of Western manuscripts at the Microfilm Library until his retirement in 1999.

No one could doubt Father Gregory's academic qualifications, but his mastery of the computer and the car was questionable. He struggled to acquire the skill needed for the double-click of his computer mouse and his driving was perilous. Once he drove on the wrong side of a row of orange road construction cones and ran smack-dab into a stationary roadside steam-roller. Tales of similar experiences entertained his confreres who now mourn the passage of a genuine monastic character.

Confirming his dependence on God's mercy the day before our July 4th Independence Day, Gregory passed from the silence of his last years into the jubilation of the saints and angels in the presence of God's glory. May he rest in peace. +



Abbey Archives

Father Gregory and his mother Catherine at his ordination reception





David Manahan, OSB

**Landelin Marvin
Robling, OSB
1925 – 2006**

Marvin, the first of five children born to Benedict and Freida (Neuman) Robling, grew up on the family farm at Victoria, Minnesota, just west of Minneapolis. Encouraged to study for the priesthood by his Franciscan pastor and the Benedictine Sisters who taught him in school, Marvin spent his senior year at Saint John's Preparatory School.

The following year he entered the novitiate and received the name Landelin after a seventh century hermit and abbot. Following ordination to the priesthood in 1952, Landelin served as assistant pastor in a rural Minnesota parish for six years.

Landelin was then assigned to the monastic community of San Antonio Abad, founded in Humacao, Puerto

Rico, by Saint John's in 1947 and established as an abbey in 1984. Here he taught English and Latin in the community's high school for a year and then became pastor of the large parish of Dulce Nombre de Jesus in Humacao.



Abbey Archives

The Church of Dulce Nombre de Jesus in Humacao, Puerto Rico

As pastor for seventeen years, Landelin's aim was always to serve the needs of the people. He built small chapels in the countryside around the city to serve the rural inhabitants and started a Newman Club in the regional college of the University of Puerto Rico. After his pastoral term he served the monastery as superior for three years and as principal of the school for a year.

Returning to Saint John's for a brief sabbatical, Landelin completed a clinical pastoral education program and then served for over twenty years as associate pastor and pastor of several Minnesota parishes.

With his appointment in 2001 as guestmaster of the abbey, Landelin took to heart Saint Benedict's counsel that "all guests are to be welcomed as Christ" (*Rule*, 53.1). He endeared himself to numerous visitors for whom he provided a comfortable and comforting stay. He was also involved in a weekend parish renewal program and served as chaplain to the retired and elderly Benedictine women of Saint Scholastica Monastery in St. Cloud.

From an early bout with rheumatic fever to quintuplet bypass heart surgery in his mid-60s, this gentle, good-natured, prayerful and conscientious monk was no stranger to heart and lung ailments during the last years of his life. He gratefully and joyfully celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of his profession of monastic vows this past July 11. Four days later, on July 15, he died peacefully. May he rest in peace. +

*Remember our loved ones
who have gone to their rest:*

- Frederick Gelbmann
- Peter Habenczius
- Mozart Kaufman
- Pauline Kingley
- Rita Klein
- Abram Kroeker
- Keith Laloo
- Val Michelson
- Jaroslav Pelikan
- Mary Potts
- Eleanor Rieland
- Anna Roerick

May they rest in peace!



Abbey Archives

Father Landelin holds a newly baptized baby.

David Manahan, OSB



“I had no food, but the people were good and brought me fish . . .”

George Wolf, OSB, returns to Saint John's and reminisces after sixty-two years of ministry in the Bahamas.

First he celebrated his ninetieth birthday on March 15, 2006, with sixty guests at Saint Augustine's Monastery. The sumptuous dinner of fish and chicken was topped off with a cake elegantly decorated by the Benedictine Sisters of Saint Martin's Monastery.

The occasion was in sharp contrast to young Father George's 1947 Christmas assignment to Grand Bahama Island. He forgot his groceries on the dock in Nassau and arrived empty-handed for three weeks of pastoral duties. The day before Christmas he walked four miles to buy kerosene to light the lamps in the church for Midnight Mass. "I had no food," he reminisced, "but the people were good and brought me fish and other food every day."

George returned to Saint John's this spring, thus ending his illustrious sixty-two years of dedicated service to the good people of the Bahamas. Ordained to the priesthood in early June, 1944, he had his first plane ride in late July when he flew from Miami to Nassau because the presence of World War II German submarines in the Caribbean made the customary boat travel unsafe.

Some years later another underwater foe attacked George. During a storm

off one of the Family Islands, he had to abandon his boat and dinghy and wade ashore through a bed of sea urchins whose sharp spines painfully pierced his feet. Having no tweezers, George worked on the spines in his feet with hot wax and a safety pin.

George's thirteen years at Sacred Heart Church in Nassau was the longest tenure of any pastor in that church's history. During the past seventeen years he commuted by plane every weekend to St. Theresa's Church on the island of Exuma.

For a decade George was the business manager of the diocese, responsible for the building of churches, schools, rectories and convents. When it was decided to build Saint Augustine's Monastery in 1946-47, George supervised its construction. He was one of the first monks to occupy the place and the last of the original group to leave.

Archbishop Patrick Pinder of Nassau summed up the sentiments of George's

many friends in the Bahamas when he said, "We thank God for the witness and example of Father George. He served with perseverance, commitment, devotion and loyalty and is a true example of what service is to the Lord and his people."

On June 8, 2006, Archbishop Pinder, attorney Michael Barnett and Mel Taylor, OSB, who remains in Nassau as pastor of Sacred Heart Church, signed the necessary papers to complete the transfer of Saint Augustine's Monastery to the Archdiocese of Nassau. +



Finian McDonald, OSB

Father George speaks at his birthday party at Saint Augustine's Monastery, Nassau, Bahamas. To his right is Archbishop Patrick Pinder.

Two university language professors retire



David Manahan, OSB

John Kulas, OSB

After teaching history and religion and coaching the debate team at Saint John's Prep School in the late 1950s, Father John taught German at Saint John's University from 1959 until his retirement this year. At that time the Executive Committee of the university Board of Regents appointed him to the rank of professor emeritus.

In a tribute to his academic colleague, Mark Thamert, OSB, of the German department writes, "When he joined the German department, Fr. John was instrumental in setting up a state-of-the-art language lab, spending long nights creating practice tapes for the students for use in the lab. So tired from teaching and being a Faculty Resident, he would fall asleep during the pauses in the tape's exercises."

John received his master's degree in German from George Washington University, Washington, D.C., in the 1960s. On three occasions while in residence at St. Stephen's Church he presided and preached when President John F. Kennedy was present for the liturgy.

Completing his doctoral studies in 1988 at the University of Minnesota, John submitted his thesis, *Influence of Der Wanderer on the Americanization of German Immigrants in Minnesota* for publication by Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., in 1996.

John chaired the Department of Modern and Classical Languages for fourteen years (1968-82). He also served the abbey as director of junior monks from 1974-78. +



David Manahan, OSB

JP Earls, OSB

JP's academic journey brought him from the Lone Star State to the North Star State. After high school in San Angelo, Texas, he received the BA in English from St. Mary's University, San Antonio. Coming to Collegeville in 1958, he taught English classes before he entered the novitiate and then began studies that led to his ordination in 1965.

After a two-year assignment as teacher and administrator at Colegio del Tepeyac in Mexico City, JP returned to Saint John's to teach English and eventually obtain his master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Arizona.

From 1973-80 he served as vice president of student affairs, thereby earning bright jewels in his eventual crown of glory. He taught American literature and poetry and was tenured as associate professor in 1990. He is the abbey's director of formation in charge of the monastic programs for novices and junior monks. He was recently appointed the liaison for abbey personnel.

Upon his retirement JP was appointed to the rank of professor emeritus. In his letter of congratulations to both John Kulas and JP Earls, Dietrich Reinhart, OSB, university president, wrote, "Your contributions will live on well into the future through the faculty you have mentored and the innumerable students whose lives you have touched with your caring instruction and guidance." +

Years of Service Awards are presented to these nine monks:

Christopher Fair, OSB – five years in woodworking

Paul Jasmer, OSB – twenty-five years in the Alcuin Library

Paul Richards, OSB – twenty-five years as director of the Boys' Choir

Aaron Raverty, OSB – thirty years at Liturgical Press

Paul Fitt, OSB – thirty-five years as faculty resident

Damian Rogers, OSB – forty years as manager of the garage

Mark Kelly, OSB – forty-five years as grounds manager

Daniel Durken, OSB – fifty years at Liturgical Press and teaching

Roger Kasprick, OSB – fifty years for teaching and other services



Lee Hanley

Judith Welter, R.N., the new director of the Saint Raphael Hall–Abbey Retirement Center

Judith Welter, R.N., new Retirement Center Director, comes home

“I grew up here, so it’s like coming home.”

Judith Welter, the new director of the Saint Raphael Hall – Abbey Retirement Center, is the daughter of Orland and Gloria Jellum, who for years worked at Saint John’s as physical plant manager and library employee respectively. Brother Charles Kirchner, OSB, late gardener and orchard manager, was a special friend who put her to work picking apples, tending bees and making candles and also taught her to drive. So Saint John’s is certainly not new to Judith.

A 1995 graduate of the nursing program of the College of Saint Benedict, Judith chose a variety of employment opportunities to provide the experience and the challenges of assisting

underserved patients. She worked in the acute psychiatric unit of the Saint Cloud Veterans Hospital, was the Health Service Supervisor of a large group home for severe to profound mentally and physically disabled patients and worked at the Crisis Detox center in Saint Cloud.

Judith gained further experience as a Hospice Care Manager and the Program Care Coordinator at the Heartland Home Care and Hospice, the supervisor of Triage department (crisis management) at Allina Home Care, Hospice and Palliative Care in Saint Paul, and as a Hospice and Palliative Care clinician at the Buffalo Mercy and Unity Hospitals.

Working to clarify her vision for Saint Raphael’s Hall – Abbey Retirement Center, Judith gives priority to the care of the residents and maintaining the family atmosphere. She is impressed by the spirit of the nursing staff who obviously love their jobs. Some remodeling will be needed, especially in the bathing, dining and gathering spaces. Summing up the center’s future she says, “The opportunities are fantastic.” +

New Abbey Appointments Announced

In his May and June letters to the monastic community, Abbot John Klassen, OSB, announced the following new appointments:

- **David Klingeman, OSB**, director of the Abbey Guesthouse
- **Isaac Connolly, OSB**, refectorian of the Abbey Guesthouse
- **Robert Pierson, OSB**, director of the Spiritual Life Programs
- **Joseph Feders, OSB**, pastor of Saint Joseph Parish, Saint Joseph, Minnesota
- **JP Earls, OSB**, personnel liaison of the abbey
- **John Hanson, OSB**, musical assistance at Holy Trinity Monastery, Saint David, Arizona
- **Saint John’s Abbey** will turn over Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Medina, Minnesota, to the Saint Paul-Minneapolis Archdiocese on June 30, 2007. +

“Come away . . . and rest a while”

by Robert Pierson, OSB

Jesus said, “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while” (Mark 6:31).

While Saint John’s Abbey is not exactly a “deserted place,” one can find a good deal of peace and quiet here. All of us need time away from our busy lives to unwind and reconnect with the voice of God within. Our Abbey Spiritual Life Program provides several options for groups and individuals to retreat and refresh themselves.

Benedictine Day of Prayer: Each retreat begins with Monastic Morning Prayer at 7 a.m., and includes instruction and discussion on faith topics related to prayer and spirituality. There are also times for group and private prayer. The program ends by 3:30 p.m. Guidance is always given on *lectio divina*, the ancient, Benedictine practice of the prayer-filled reading of God’s Word. The \$50 fee includes breakfast, lunch, the retreat program and materials. Upcoming dates for this fall and early winter are:

September 15

Topic: Exaltation of the Cross

November 3

Topic: The Souls in Purgatory

December 1

Topic: The Season of Advent

December 29

Topic: The Mystery of the Incarnation

On-line registration for our Benedictine Day of Prayer is possible at <http://www.saint-johnsabbey.org/slp/register.html>.

Individual Retreats: Saint John’s offers two kinds of individual retreats throughout the year: private or directed. You choose the dates, the length of time and the kind. Private retreats provide solitude for rest, reading, reflection and prayer. You are welcome to join the monks for prayer. Meals are served in a special guest dining room. Directed retreats provide the private retreat experience plus regular one-to-one conversation with a spiritual director.

Small Group Retreats: The Spiritual Life Program offers groups the opportunity to meet, reflect and pray together. A monk leads discussion on spiritual topics, or you may provide your own leadership. Our overnight facilities have been limited, but that is soon to change with the opening of our new Abbey Guesthouse on December 1, 2006.

Individual Spiritual Direction: A spiritual director facilitates your reflection, in faith, on your life experiences in relation to God, yourself and others. The goal is for you to gain



Fran Hoefgen, OSB

increased self-knowledge and hear the voice of God in your everyday life. The usual offering for a session of spiritual direction is \$35-\$50 or what you are able to offer. Room and meals are extra.

We welcome men and women of all faiths to any of our programs. For more information on any of these programs, please contact our Abbey Spiritual Life Office at spiritalife@osb.org or phone 320-363-3929. We look forward to welcoming you to our home! +

Robert Pierson, OSB, is the newly appointed director of Saint John’s Spiritual Life Program.

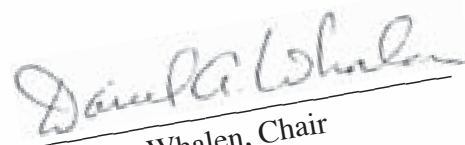
A Resolution of the Board of Regents of Saint John's University

On the occasion of the Sesquicentennial of the founding of Saint John's Abbey, the Board of Regents of Saint John's University wishes to express its gratitude to the monks of Saint John's Abbey for the dedication and generosity that have animated their communal life and service of the Gospel since the arrival in Minnesota of the founding Benedictine monks on May 2, 1856.

On behalf of the tens of thousands of students and graduates of Saint John's University whose lives have been enlarged through the teaching, scholarship, mentoring, prayer and friendship of the monks of Saint John's since the founding of the University, the Board of Regents salutes the monks of Saint John's Abbey and extends our heartfelt good wishes and prayers for the future.

May the monastic life of Saint John's, that began with such courage and has taken root through faith and giving of self over many generations, that has produced such good results in the lives of graduates and their families, churches and communities, that has responded creatively to so many challenges in church and society, often in fact anticipating them far in advance of others—may the monastic life of Saint John's continue to flourish that in all things God may be glorified.

May you, the monks of Saint John's Abbey, know the inestimable value of the way of life God has called you to live! And may the light that so many see whenever they behold your witness in the world continue to warm your hearts, fire your imagination and give you fresh courage!


Dan Whalen, Chair

May 22, 2006



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