Bless the Lord, all the Lord’s creation:
praise and glorify him forever!
Bless the Lord, every plant that grows,
praise and glorify him forever!

--Daniel 3:57, 76
This issue of Abbey Banner is the first that founding editor Father Daniel Durken has not personally overseen. For ten years, in thirty issues, with 960 pages Father Daniel printed rhyme and reason in three seasons, describing in delightful detail all the graces and places along the abbey road, telling the tales of the weary or cheery monastery. Who would have thunk that so much spunk could come from a monk from Pemberton, Minnesota! Thank you, Father Daniel, for these banner years, for your fine service to Saint John’s and to the Church—as monk and priest, preacher and teacher, editor and publisher. May God bless you abundantly!

To help us prepare for the holiest days of the Christian calendar, Father Michael Kwateria outlines observances for “Living the Easter Triduum.” With his usual pastoral insight, he explains the significance of these liturgies, inviting our prayerful participation. Easter and the resurrection are also the starting points of our alpha and omega columns: Abbot John Klassen reflects on hospitality and the Emmaus story; Father Timothy Backous closes this issue with his reflections on our lives after the party is over—living in ordinary time.

What is Benedictine? Eric Loehr shares how he was formed by a Benedictine education that stretches from The St. John’s Boys’ Choir, to undergraduate studies, to singing praises with the Abbey Schola.

Since the 1920s Saint John’s has proclaimed the Good News through the publications of Liturgical Press. Brother Ælred Senna introduces a new daily prayer aid, one that we hope will have a very long life.

We observe two significant anniversaries in Saint John’s history. Fifty years ago the abbey church was blessed and dedicated. Father Hilary Thimmesh, a member of the planning committee, shares with us the excitement, the debate, and the challenges of designing a “church which will be truly an architectural monument in the service of God” (Abbot Baldwin Dworschak). Eighty years ago the Spirit guided Benedictines to ministry in Japan. Father Edward Vebelun outlines the hardships of the pioneer days, ending with a celebration of the living community.

To round out this issue, we present another chapter of our Benedictine Volunteers; celebrate the life and times of our senior Texan, Father J. P. Earls; introduce our monastic candidates; and bake bread together with the formation director.

The staff of Abbey Banner joins Abbot John and the monastic community in extending prayers and best wishes to all our readers for a blessed Easter.

—Brother Robin Pierzina, O.S.B.
For our purpose, few gospel stories serve as well as the account of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). They have had enough. They are leaving Jerusalem, frustrated, disappointed, and grieving. When a stranger asks them, “What are you talking about?” their response is one of disbelief and frustration: “Are you the only one who has not heard? Where have you been?”

O you foolish ones . . . The Gospels repeatedly say that “Jesus teaches with authority.” This does not mean that Jesus never had a bad day in a classroom. Jesus is probably dismayed by what these two disciples think happened on the cross. “Just a prophet—not quite—can you say ‘Son of God?’” Jesus again teaches the Scriptures and the path to the cross. The disciples think they are the hosts and this stranger is the guest.

Stay . . . It is the plea of countless love songs. Stay with us. This stranger has opened their minds and hearts, but they still don’t recognize him. This invitation is from the core of their being. It is a crucial move in becoming a disciple of Jesus. Sooner or later, every single one of us, every single community has to say to the risen Jesus: Stay! It is evening; the day is almost over; it is time to eat.

He took bread . . . Earlier in the story we were told that their eyes were kept from recognizing him. Part of this is surely grief. Grief has the capacity to shut down our emotional and intellectual detectors. How does the change happen? Meals were a fundamental part of the ministry of Jesus. Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it; and their eyes were opened. The two disciples now see the risen Christ as the host.

Were not our hearts burning? The Scriptures burn the heart; the Scriptures open eyes to see the spiritual. As the two disciples return to Jerusalem, they are replaying the conversation with the stranger. They will retell this story a million times, each time with gratitude and tears in their eyes, the way that husbands and wives who are deeply in love tell how they met.

For these two disciples, hospitality opens them to the mystery of the resurrection.
The wonder of the Easter Triduum, the Church’s yearly, three-day celebration of Easter, begins with the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday and ends with evening prayer on Easter Sunday. The services in between form a single liturgy: our solemn celebration of the paschal mystery, God’s Easter plan for our salvation in which, through baptism, we share in the dying and rising of Jesus.

**Holy Thursday**

Holy Thursday is the last day of Lent, a final opportunity to complete the Lenten preparation for the great feast that begins that evening.

**Before the evening Mass**

- Try to be at peace with God, yourself, and others. Muster spiritual energy by bringing your Lenten prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to a close. Let the renewal of heart and mind that results from your Lenten penance carry you into and through the Triduum.

- Use your family’s evening meal on Holy Thursday to recall the meals that Jesus shared with his disciples, especially the festive meal on the night before he died. Special table prayers might be prayed, for example, those contained in *To Thank and Bless: Prayers at Meals* (Liturgical Press, 2007). This collection of seasonal table prayers includes one for each day of the Triduum.

**During the Mass**

- Jesus’ gift of self to us in the Eucharist points back to his whole life of self-sacrifice, and forward to his final and perfect gift of self to his Father on the cross. Let the Scripture readings for this Mass (Exod 12:1-8, 11-14; Psalm 116; 1 Cor 11:23-26; John 13:1-15) lead you to live a life of self-sacrifice.

- The washing of feet, narrated in the gospel reading, is a powerful part of the liturgy. See in this humble human act a reflection of God’s self-emptying love in the ministry and passion of Jesus and a model of service for your own selfless love for others.

- As you pray the general intercessions, remember that many others are also celebrating the Lord’s Supper this night. Pray that all Christians will be able to share this sacred meal in the unity that Jesus prayed for at the Last Supper.

**After the Mass**

- The transfer of the Blessed Sacrament to the place of reposition and the stripping of the altar bring a clear change in mood. As you reflect on the Lord’s betrayal into the hands of sinful humanity, you share the disciples’ reaction to Jesus’ repeated predictions of his passion: “And they were overwhelmed with grief” (Matt 17:23). Follow Jesus’ example in Gethsemane and turn to God, watching and praying before the Blessed Sacrament.

- Use private spiritual reading in church for your meditation, and take part in any public prayer during the period of adoration.

**Good Friday**

While the liturgy on Good Friday focuses our attention more specifically on the Lord’s suffering and death, it cannot let us forget his resurrection: Good Friday and Easter are two complementary aspects of the one mystery of salvation.

**Before the celebration**

- This is the beginning of the paschal fast, which ideally extends until the Easter Vigil. Allow your fasting from bodily food to heighten your desire for spiritual nourishment in the Easter feast.

- Participate in morning prayer or the Office of Readings. Psalm 22 (the prayer of the Suffering Servant), the Way of the Cross, the sorrowful mysteries of the
rosary, or the Litany of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus will help you to prepare for the afternoon service.


During the celebration

The silent entrance emphasizes the reflective starkness of this day’s liturgy. After the presider kneels or prostrates, fill yourself with the spirit of Romano Guardini’s words: “To appear less presumptuous, to be as little and low as we feel, we sink to our knees and thus sacrifice half our height. . . . To kneel, in the soul’s intention, is to bow down before God in deepest reverence” (Sacred Signs, p. 20).

Liturgy of the Word

The Gospel of John presents “the passion of a sovereign king who has overcome the world” (Raymond Brown). Some dialogue versions of the Passion assign the “crowd” parts (“Crucify him!”) to the congregation. If such a version is used in your parish, voice these parts as all humanity’s rejection of the Savior.

Solemn intercessions conclude the Liturgy of the Word. Use the silence after each invitation to pray for specific persons or groups. This silence is your time to offer personal intentions which the presider will unite with those of your fellow worshippers in the concluding prayer.

Veneration of the Cross

- Turn to face the cross as it is carried in procession and sing “Come, let us worship” in response to the minister’s “This is the wood of the cross. . . .” This acclamation parallels the triple “Christ our light” and “Thanks be to God!” during the procession with the Easter candle at the Vigil.

- The cross may be venerated communally, perhaps with a hymn; but if you are invited to venerate the cross individually, do so by bowing, genuflecting, touching or kissing it.

Holy Communion

- After the Lord’s Prayer, receive the eucharistic bread consecrated on Holy Thursday, and recommit yourself to what you professed by venerating the cross: your love for the Lord who offered himself as the redeeming sacrifice in which you now share through Holy Communion.

After the celebration

- Try to spend the rest of Good Friday in fasting, quiet prayer, and meditation. Extend the day’s liturgy to your home by placing the crucifix in a place of honor and burning a candle near it, or by reading the scriptural account of the Lord’s death and burial before your simple evening meal.

Easter Vigil

Over half a century has passed since Pope Pius XII restored the Easter Vigil to its supreme dignity in the liturgical year, yet many Catholics have never shared the Vigil’s sense of expectancy and fulfillment.

Before the Vigil

- Leave your watch at home or in your pocket. The Easter Vigil lasts significantly longer than a Sunday Mass, so remove whatever can distract you from the important words and actions of the liturgy. Do not leave older children (or teenagers) at home. The Vigil has much that will appeal to their senses: lighting and extinguishing of candles, singing of psalms and songs, ringing of bells during the Gloria, sprinkling with blessed water.

- Come prepared to be a participant rather than a spectator. Even if you don’t see or hear or understand everything, the Vigil is still your celebration.
The Easter Vigil has four main parts:
1) the Service of Light, in which we greet the risen Christ, the light of the world;
2) the Liturgy of the Word, in which we recall Christ’s resurrection in prophecy and fulfillment;
3) the Liturgy of Baptism, in which we celebrate the baptismal commitment of new brothers and sisters in Christ, and in which we renew our baptismal promises to live as God’s people;
4) the Liturgy of the Eucharist, in which we share the Body and Blood of the risen Christ—the pledge of our own resurrection.

Service of Light

• Turn to welcome the light of Christ as the fire is blessed and the lighted Easter candle is carried through the church. After lighting your candle, hold it high, recalling the light that is set on a stand so it can illuminate all who have gathered in the house of God. Listen to the joyful message of the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet).

Liturgical of the Word

• Listen to the Scripture readings as if you were sitting before a campfire with your family and delighting in your family’s favorite stories. The dancing flame atop the Easter candle sheds its gladdening light upon you as you listen to some of the most treasured stories from the Scriptures.

• In acclamating the Gospel, welcome back the “Alleluia” as you would a good friend who has just returned from a forty-day journey.

Liturgy of Baptism

• Easter is the most privileged time for celebrating baptism. The ritual words and gestures of this part of the Vigil are directed to the candidates for baptism and their godparents (and parents in the case of children). Yet you remain a participant. You are a member of the Church that is welcoming new members through the sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation, and first Eucharist in the case of adults). Recall your own baptism, and receive new strength for your daily dying and rising with Christ.

Liturgical of the Eucharist

• During the Eucharistic Prayer, offer yourself with Christ, who gave himself up to death but was raised to life; taste in the eucharistic bread and wine the goodness of the risen Lord, who is both the host and the food at his paschal meal.

• Let the dismissal with double “Alleluia!” send you forth into the Easter season of fifty days of unlimited rejoicing!

Father Michael Kwatra, O.S.B., is director of liturgy and director of oblates for Saint John’s Abbey.
Eric Loehr

“Some men see things as they are and say why. I dream things that never were and say why not.” George Bernard Shaw

I have held these words close to my heart for years, but never have they resonated with me more than in my past four years at Saint John’s University. My inspired view of the world and my future have been encouraged by the monks of Saint John’s Abbey.

My dreams of becoming a professional musician began in the fourth grade when I became a member of The St. John’s Boys’ Choir. As a young boy I had Benedictine values instilled in me that will last a lifetime. In the Boys’ Choir, director Brother Paul Richards, O.S.B., taught me not only to have an ear for music but also to hear “with the ear of [my] heart,” as Saint Benedict states.

Not until my freshman year at Saint John’s did I come to appreciate the voice that the abbey has given me and hundreds of other students. I may have learned my writing skills and grammatical knowledge from the exceptional professors in the classroom, but it has been the members of the monastic community who have inspired my passion for writing about silent injustices and minorities.

During my freshman year Brother Dietrich Reinhart, O.S.B. (then president of the university), commended my “Letter to the Editor” in the local newspaper in which I voiced my concern for how another local university was being painted with a negative brush, far too broad to define the school and all it had to offer. I realized then that I had been given more than just a singing voice from the abbey; I had been given a renewed commitment to Saint Benedict’s instruction: “No person is to pursue what is judged best for oneself, but instead, what is better for someone else.”

I thank Brother Paul for further stimulating my love for music by inviting me to join the Abbey Schola, singing for the abbey Masses twice a month. Engaging with these monks, whom I now consider friends, I have been inspired to seek moderation in my life as well as to “strive for peace on all levels: with self, others, and God.”

I have been showered as well with hospitality by President Father Robert Koopmann, O.S.B., who, in addition to being my piano instructor, continues to reserve time for me, write letters of recommendation, and break into his busy schedule for conversation with me. His hospitality has encouraged me to extend my hand, “to offer warmth, acceptance, and joy in welcoming others.”

These qualities, values, and fostered dreams are the product of the selfless giving of the monks of Saint John’s Abbey to the students. I believe this is a relationship unique to Saint John’s.

AB

Mr. Eric Loehr, a senior of Saint John’s University, will graduate in May.
Ælred Senna, O.S.B.

In 1926 Father Virgil Michel, O.S.B., oversaw the publication of a booklet entitled *Offeramus*, which contained the Order of Mass arranged for congregational participation. That publication marked the beginning of Liturgical Press and its mission to publish the Good News of Jesus Christ, to deepen the faith and knowledge of a richly diverse Church. That mission continues even to this day in *Give Us This Day*.

*Give Us This Day* is Liturgical Press’ new monthly prayer publication and is set to launch in August. Consistent with Father Virgil’s booklet, *Give Us This Day* includes the Order of Mass, but it goes much further as it seeks to serve the needs of daily prayer for today’s Catholic. The story of how it came to be can only be attributed to the Spirit of God moving within countless people—and over quite some time.

About ten years ago the editorial staff at the Press began to explore the possibility of a publication that would help people connect liturgy with their day-to-day lives. The idea was to bring aspects of liturgy into the home, offering songs, table blessings, and prayers for various times of the day. “As we tested the material, we discovered that our approach was too didactic,” recalled Mr. Peter Dwyer, director of Liturgical Press. “People didn’t want to be told exactly what to do at this time and that time. It was too confining and didn’t translate well into real life.” So, for several years, the idea lay dormant, occasionally resurfacing, but never quite finding its way into print.

In 2009 Liturgical Press conducted an online survey to learn what resources Catholics today are seeking. This revealed that there is a hunger for material to support daily prayer—at various times of the day, for Mass, or through reflection on Scripture. It seems that people earnestly want to pray but, like Jesus’ own disciples, they are looking for guidance and support. Thus, *Give Us This Day* was born again.

Ms. Mary Stommes was asked to be the editor of the project, should it come to fruition. “I said I would think about it . . . pray about it. But it seemed like such an ambitious project; I didn’t think I would have to make a decision,” she said. “And then we began talking with people outside Liturgical Press. The passion was evident. From people in the pews and bishops, to clergy and religious, to people who agreed to be
editorial advisors and contributors—we kept hearing that *Give Us This Day* would help fill a great need in the Church, build bridges, build a greater sense of communion. These responses seemed an obvious outpouring of the Spirit. We paid attention, listened—a Benedictine value that has brought *Give Us This Day* to publication and will guide us going forward.”

*Give Us This Day*’s daily content includes prayer for morning and evening, the readings for Mass and a short reflection, a profile of a saintly witness who has gone before us. There is also a monthly feature essay, reflections on traditional prayers of the Church, and, of course, the Order of Mass. In an interview Ms. Stommes described the vision that Liturgical Press has for the new publication:

“Day by day people will hear a wide range of voices from our Catholic tradition. Saint Augustine and Flannery O’Connor, Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and Father Michael Casey—the list is practically endless—all these voices have something important to say to us today, something that leads us into the communion we desire.

“What emerges in these parts of the whole—the monthly essays and prayers, the weekly ‘Within the Word’ feature, the daily content—is the intimate link between Scripture, liturgy, and life. Scripture and liturgy are life-giving and life-changing. They draw us in and send us out. The more voices we hear affirming and proclaiming that, the better it will be for us as a Church.”

(The full interview was posted 28 January 2011 on the Pray Tell blog: www.praytellblog.com.)

Father Virgil Michel would surely be proud to see that Liturgical Press continues its work to help the faithful engage in a more enriching spiritual, liturgical, and prayer-filled life.

*Abbey Banner* readers interested in learning more about this publication can visit the Web site www.giveusthisday.org to request a free sample copy, or to subscribe and receive a 33% discount off the annual subscription rate by using the promotion code FRIEND33.

AB

Brother Ælred Senna, O.S.B., is associate publisher of *Give Us This Day* at Liturgical Press.

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**New Books by Benedictines**

“Monastic Interreligious Dialogue” Series by William Skudlarek, O.S.B.

One sign of the growing need for interreligious dialogue is a new “Monastic Interreligious Dialogue” Series at Liturgical Press to enable persons rooted in their own religious traditions to share their spiritual riches with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith, and ways of searching for God. Belgian Benedictines are authors of the series’ first two books: *Sharing Sacred Space: Interreligious Dialogue as Spiritual Encounter* by Benoît Standaert (which I translated) and *Interreligious Hospitality: The Fulfillment of Dialogue* by Pierre-François de Béthune. These works explain practices that help Christians regard with reverence and learn from other ways of searching for God.

A new publication of Liturgical Press is my translation of Fabrice Blée’s *The Third Desert*. The author’s thesis is that the desert to which contemporary monks are drawn in their search for God is not the barren wilderness but the religiously “other.”

I have edited two books published by Lantern books in New York: *God’s Harp String*, the life and legacy of Henri Le Saux, a French monk who went to India in 1948 and pioneered open-hearted acceptance of other spiritual traditions; and *Green Monasticism*, papers given at the third Gethsemani Encounter in 2008 when Buddhist and Catholic monks discussed monasticism and environment.

Father William Skudlarek, O.S.B., is secretary of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue, Saint Anselm’s Abbey, Rome.
The Abbey and University Church designed by Marcel Breuer first showed up as a little trapezoidal block in a tabletop model of the comprehensive plan for the campus in 1953. Mr. Breuer had been commissioned to do a comprehensive plan to meet the needs of a growing monastic community and student body. Everybody agreed that a new church should be part of the plan.

Not everybody agreed, however, that Mr. Breuer’s notion of a church was what we wanted. It didn’t look very churchy. Abbot Baldwin Dworschak, O.S.B., sent Father Cloud Meinberg, O.S.B., art teacher and architect, to Europe for a sabbatical in 1954 – 1955 to check out new churches and consult influential opinion on modern architecture and the Church.

In 1955 we moved into the new wing of the monastery, now called the Breuer wing. Since it included sacristies for the church-to-be, the die was cast: a church designed by somebody would be attached to the north side of this building where it would be the dominant structure on campus. Mr. Breuer had experimented with facing the church west to give it a classic east-west orientation, or south to provide it with a sunlit plaza and a view of Lake Sagatagan but reluctantly concluded that neither plan was feasible.

In October 1956 Abbot Baldwin appointed a church planning committee that formulated a questionnaire for the whole community, conducted discussions open to monastic members and nonmembers alike, considered the plusses and minuses of Marcel Breuer as a church architect, and finally recommended retaining him for the church. The monastic community approved, and Mr. Breuer came in December with his new associate, Hamilton Smith, for the first of many meetings over the next four years.

Mr. Breuer was soft-spoken, serious, and on the whole rather
Formal. He and Abbot Baldwin got to be good friends. Mr. Ham Smith—no one called him Hamilton—was a new associate in the small New York firm and could have been a clone of Mr. Breuer in his style and attention to detail.

A basic floor plan for the church was part of the comprehensive plan. To proceed to working drawings Mr. Breuer needed to know more about how the church would be used and how many people it should seat. We told him we wanted to seat all of the college students at daily Mass in the main body of the church and all of the prep school students in the crypt.

College enrollment had reached 1,000 that year; prep enrollment was close to 250. Father Coleman Barry, O.S.B., who had just published our centennial history Worship and Work, was on the committee and argued that we had never built big enough. The committee guessed that seating for 1,650 college students, including one hundred diocesan seminarians, would accommodate anticipated growth. If 250 preps could be seated in the downstairs chapel, it would also be large enough to serve as the parish church.

Choir stalls for about two hundred monks were wanted upstairs and at least sixty for the lay brothers in a separate chapel downstairs since they recited their Hours of the liturgy in English, not Latin. Altars for the daily Masses of the many priests in the community would be needed in the crypt. In line with the principles of liturgical renewal articulated in the committee by both Fathers Godfrey Diekmann, O.S.B., and Michael Marx, O.S.B., there were to be no side altars in the main body of the church.

Details about the altar and the sanctuary were the subject of much discussion in community meetings in the first months of 1957. We wouldn’t need a communion rail; communion tables would take its place. We put a mock-up communion table in the Alumni Lounge to get the right dimensions and to practice receiving Communion standing, not kneeling. The size of the altar was debated; some thought a main altar not even nine feet long and raised only one step above the sanctuary floor would lack dignity and be too small for solemn high Masses with priest, deacon, subdeacon, master of ceremonies, and acolytes. For that matter the area of the sanctuary would be scanty once a sixth row of choir stalls was added to get the two hundred seats we wanted.

The likelihood of the altar being regularly used for Mass facing the people was considered remote, a reminder that the church is pre-Vatican II. We hesitated to place the tabernacle on a freestanding altar but didn’t know where to put a Blessed Sacrament chapel and didn’t want to abandon our custom of reciting the Divine Office in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. In the end we put a low tabernacle on the altar.

In New York Mr. Breuer and his young associates Mr. Ham Smith and Mr. Bob Gatje refined major structural features of the church. A balcony to seat five hundred people was to be cantilevered on four massive piers at the back of the nave but independent of the back wall which was now to be a concrete honeycomb filled
with stained glass rather than an irregular pattern of rectangular sheets of clear glass. The base of the banner would now form a great arch over the entrance to the church and support a vertically cantilevered slab more than a hundred feet high with a horizontal aperture for the bells and a vertical aperture for a Latin cross.

The crypt plan had seating for 480 in the prep/parish chapel, 120 in the lay brothers’ chapel, and 34 small side chapels opening on their own perimeter corridor for private Masses.

Preliminary plans for a new organ designated a recessed space at one edge of the sanctuary for the console balanced by a space on the other side of the altar for the ambo. Chapter house plans took shape with a floor plan that looked suspiciously like the layout for the much larger UNESCO headquarters designed by Mr. Breuer and then under construction in Paris. A favorable price for granite sheathing for the exterior of the church was worked out with Cold Spring Granite.

In October 1957 the working drawings were put out for bid. The bids came in at over $2,000,000, and in November the community voted not to proceed with construction at that cost. Remarkably, no one objected to the design. Thus it was not surprising when the same chapter members voted overwhelmingly to let the contract five months later in April 1958 when successful fund-raising, lower costs for concrete and steel, and an ingenious technique for substantially reducing the cost of formwork made the financial picture much brighter.

A second phase of planning now began as the architect turned his attention to furnishings and artistic features. Mr. Frank Kacmarcik—everyone called him Frank—was chosen to be art consultant and from late summer 1958 played an intimate role in producing the final look of the church interior. The plain, impeccably lettered cornerstone; the bronze John the Baptist in the baptistery and wooden Mary, Queen of Wisdom, in the Marian shrine; the dignified and roomy interior of the confessional meant to stand open to symbolize divine mercy when not occupied; the Saint Peregrine relic shrine, evocative of the catacombs; the subtly differentiated private Mass chapels that could so easily have come off as rows of identical cubicles; the baldachin above the main altar; Frank’s hand was unmistakable even though the finished work was unquestionably Mr. Breuer’s.

Ironically Frank had no success with the two greatest artistic features of the church: the mural intended for the apse screen and the stained-glass work in the north window wall. Mr. Breuer intended the apse screen mural as the major iconographic statement in the church. He thought a mosaic could be created by using about a third of the openings in the screen without blocking the sound of the organ pipes concealed behind it. From time to time throughout the four years of planning he inquired about our progress in selecting an artist to do this. Despite some efforts we never found one.
The stained-glass north wall was not part of the original plan. It became a possibility when the honeycomb structure was introduced. It was an immense area, roughly 65' x 165' feet, with close to five hundred frames, most of them complete hexagons, to be filled with stained glass. Mr. Breuer did not think of the window as an iconographic opportunity but as a light filter that would affect how people experienced the interior of the church.

In the summer of 1958 Mr. Bronislaw Bak arrived on campus as a faculty member in the art department. He had worked in stained glass. Early in October he showed the committee a small sketch of a design for the church window. Mr. Breuer saw it later in the month and commented that it was promising. To simplify a complex story, the committee chose Mr. Bak to do the window. Brothers Placid Stuckenschneider, O.S.B., and Andrew Goltz, O.S.B., and Mr. Dick Haeg worked with him to fabricate the monumental window, hexagon by hexagon, in the old dairy barn. Installation of the window in summer 1961 marked completion of the church.

In the end the church was Marcel Breuer’s in virtually every detail, and the quality of the craftsmanship met his high standards. Writing about it years later Mr. Ham Smith called it a building fully realized and the architect’s finest achievement.

**The Benedictine tradition at its best challenges us to think boldly and to cast our ideas in forms which will be valid for centuries to come, shaping them with all the genius of present-day materials and techniques. We feel that the modern architect with his orientation toward functionalism and honest use of materials is uniquely qualified to produce a Catholic work. In our position it would, we think, be deplorable to build anything less, particularly since our age and our country have thus far produced so little truly significant religious architecture.**

--Abbot Baldwin Dworschak, O.S.B.

In March 1953 Abbot Baldwin sent a letter, including the excerpt above, to a dozen architects, inquiring whether each would be interested in assisting Saint John’s in the preparation of a master plan and, in particular, in designing a “church which will be truly an architectural monument in the service of God.” The architects included Richard Neutra, Walter Gropius, Eero Saarinen, Thomas Sharp, Marcel Breuer, Barry Byrne, Pietro Belluschi, Rudolf Schwarz, Herman Baur, Robert Kramreiter, A. Bosslet, and Joseph Murphy. Father Colman Barry, O.S.B., in his centenary history of Saint John’s, *Worship and Work* (pp. 336 – 337), observed: “To everyone’s surprise all the architects who received letters answered with considerable interest, and all but two, who were too busy to accept, applied for the assignment. Five of the architects [Mr. Gropius, Mr. Neutra, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Breuer] were then invited to Collegeville to confer.” In April 1953, Marcel Breuer was selected because, “as Abbot Baldwin stated: ‘He struck us as being not only an outstanding architect, but a simple, straightforward, sincere and rather humble person.’”

Father Hilary Thimmesh, O.S.B., is director of the Benedictine Institute of Saint John’s University.
Abbey Art
A recent gift to the abbey from Mr. Michael J. Kraus is this Bernard Buffet print of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris. Saint-Germain-des-Prés was a monastic community early involved in the study of manuscripts, handwritten documents especially from the time before Gutenberg. Today the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library at Saint John’s continues these important studies.


Three more study drawings by Brother Clement Frischauf who did the drawing on the cover of this issue.

**top**
Studies for the murals of the life of monks that are in the monastic refectory. The pattern of the ceiling beams is projected above the wall paneling and murals. Watercolor and pencil on cardboard.

**bottom**
Two studies of angel acolytes. Pencil on tracing paper.

Photos: Alan Reed, O.S.B.
Edward Vebelun O.S.B.

Trinity Benedictine Monastery, dependent priory of Saint John’s Abbey, celebrated the eightieth anniversary of Benedictines in Japan on the feast of Saint Benedict, 21 March. At this celebration the community gave Father Kieran Nolan, O.S.B., who has served in Japan for twenty-five years, a farewell blessing and welcomed two new candidates.

On 5 December 1931 Benedictine Fathers Bernard Happle (1900—1983) and Hildebrand Yaiser (1901—1983) arrived in Japan from Beuron Abbey in Germany. The first question asked of them was, “Do you have any bad thoughts?” posed by an immigration official, meaning “communist thoughts”! The enthusiasm for mission that they brought from Europe was not reciprocated in Japan at the time. The 1930s was an era of charged political tensions and not an ideal time to begin a mission.

The two pioneer monks spent their initial years studying Japanese and scouting a suitable location for a monastery. In 1933 they established a temporary monastery, “The New Subiaco,” in Denenchofu on the outskirts of Tokyo. They requested more monks from Beuron Abbey and five were sent. In 1936 they built a monastery on a hill called Tonogaoka in Chigasaki, south of Yokohama. Again they needed more help. A new contingent of monks increased the total to thirteen German monks.

The early monks of Tonogaoka set up a fruit farm and a garden large enough to provide for their essential needs. In time they became known for their liturgy and for a liturgical and spirituality journal entitled Phos Christou. They opened a preschool and received a number of oblates and retreatants.

The rapid progress of the earliest years would fall victim to World War II, however. Nationalism was rising, and it was difficult for foreign missionaries to attract vocations or converts in Japan. Political nationalism in Germany also cut off their lifeline from home. The community was dependent upon aid from Europe. The German Reich forbade the transfer of funds outside of the country. Raphael Walzer, O.S.B., abbot of Beuron from 1918—1937, was caught attempting to sneak money to the young mission through Switzerland. He eventually went into voluntary exile and resigned in order to protect the reputation of Beuron.

A closing Mass for the Tonogaoka monastery was held on 10 February 1940, and the property was transferred to the Ottilien Benedictine Congregation, which managed a study house there until the property was sold, under pressure, to the Japanese navy in 1942.

Two Benedictine monks, Fathers Hildebrand Yaiser and Joseph Schmerbach, remained in Japan. When the war ended, they searched the
United States for a new sponsor. They found Saint John’s Abbey and Abbot Alcuin Deutsch, O.S.B. In 1947 Saint John’s sent money and a trickle of monks to war-torn Japan. The Benedictine mission would be born again, this time in Meguro, Tokyo.

**Farewell to Brother Nicholas and Father Kieran**

Brother Nicholas Thelen, O.S.B., served in Japan for forty of the community’s eighty years, and Father Kieran Nolan, O.S.B., for twenty-five years. Brother Nicholas oversaw the physical plant in Meguro and Fujimi, and served as the monastery cook for several years. His talent for innovative repair inspired and calmed many a frustrated monk. His steady character anchored many.

Father Kieran was pastor of the Meguro Saint Anselm Parish and head of the parish preschool. He also served as prior while the community planned and carried out the move to its present site in Fujimi of the Nagano Prefecture. Father Kieran is known for his gregarious personality and humble charm. His unique ability to juggle dozens of ideas at once appeals to volunteers who come to his aid without his ever making a request.

Brother Nicholas returned to Saint John’s two years ago but officially retired from service in the priory earlier in the year. Father Kieran recently returned to Saint John’s.

**Greeting and Blessing of New Candidates**

The Fujimi community received and blessed two new candidates at the anniversary celebration. Conrad Ozawa Yoshimitsu (32), who was born in Kumamoto, and Lacus Odashima Atsushi (38) from Chigasaki began their candidacy. Coincidentally, Odashima is from the same city, Chigasaki, where the early Benedictine monastery was located. Perhaps the two will be part of the next chapter in the community’s long history.

**11 March Earthquake**

The earthquake, 9.0 magnitude, considered to be the strongest in modern Japan history, was centered off the coast of Sendai and brought tsunamis to the shore. Though Trinity Benedictine Monastery is several hundred miles away, the monastery shook violently for three to four minutes followed by repeated aftershocks. The fishing village of Ogawa in the Miyagi Prefecture, hometown of Brother Maria Dominic Takahashi, O.S.B., was devastated by a tsunami. Brother Takahashi’s mother, Keiko Takahashi (64), and his sister, Mayuko Takahashi (33), along with perhaps half of the ten thousand residents of the town, are among the dead. The stories of devastation from tsunamis and the continuing high risk of the Fukushima nuclear reactor have impact all around Japan.

Fujimi candidates Lacus Odashima Atsushi (left) and Conrad Ozawa Yoshimitsu.
Collegrove

Corey Friend

S
ince January Collegeville has been home for two Benedictine Volunteer Corps members, one more than in the fall.

Manny McDonald continues his service as Benedictine Volunteer for Saint John’s Abbey and Saint John’s Preparatory School where he assists as the prep senate advisor, has coordinated and facilitated several events for the prep community, teaches a biology class as well as the corresponding lab section, and has remained a helping hand for the monastic community. Manny has served cheerfully and well since day one and is very grateful for his placement in Collegeville.

As noted in the winter 2010 Abbey Banner, I began my work with the Benedictine Volunteer Corps in the Philippines last fall, serving with Matthew Harren at the Abbey of Our Lady of Montserrat. However, shortly before Christmas, I learned that the Filipino culture, history, and political science course that I’d been assigned to teach had been designated for another professor. After consulting with the communities in Manila and Saint John’s, I recognized that my service could be better utilized at Saint John’s Prep, working in the admissions office, assisting the professional staff in the creation of a number of promotional videos, and overseeing the design and transition to a new prep school Web site. And that’s what I’ve been doing during this spring semester.

Though others might assume that volunteering at Saint John’s is easier than in other sites around the world, Manny and I find our work challenging; and we are no less committed to maintaining the same level of professionalism and respect expected of all Volunteers. Of course, we do enjoy home-field advantage at Saint John’s. Above all, we are grateful for the daily opportunity to pray, eat, and live with those responsible for fostering and creating the culture and community that shaped our collegiate experience and that has given us unique and valuable perspectives on what it truly means to live out a Benedictine lifestyle as a Johnnie graduate.

Mr. Corey Friend graduated from Saint John’s University in 2010.

The Sperl Brothers

Benjamin DeMarais

T
he Saint John’s Benedictine Volunteer Corps has become a family affair for Saint John’s University alumni Liam, Gabe, and Simon Sperl of Menomonie, Wisconsin. In 2007 Liam accepted a position with the Benedictine Volunteers at the Abbey of Jesus Christ Crucified in Esquipulas, Guatemala. This year Gabe and Simon, his younger brothers, are serving with the Volunteer Corps in Coban (Guatemala) and Nairobi (Kenya), respectively.

At Resurrection Priory in Coban, Gabe and fellow Saint John’s alumnus Connor McIntee are implementing a project on technological education for social development. The program’s goals include Spanish/bilingual education, community development, nutrition education, practical skill tutorials, and instructional
videos. Gabe and Connor are also helping to repair solar panels and batteries that will power the computers, becoming more familiar with the software they will be teaching, and continuing to recruit other volunteers who will help with the implementation in the nearby villages.

Simon’s work at a community center of Tigoni Monastery is focused on creating better living environments for street children in the slums of Nairobi. Simon explains: “We have a team of innovative community workers who walk the streets, identifying and recruiting school-age children who live and work in the streets. These children undergo a rehabilitation process, which involves extended family identification, behavior change, and literacy classes. Instead of putting these children in a ‘home’ at our center, we trace their family relations so that they can have a permanent and sustainable home.”

Simon is also engaged in a family tradition: overseeing the construction of a fence, made of trash, around the center’s community garden. Three years ago Liam Sperl and fellow Volunteer Michael Anderson, with the assistance of local kids, stuffed trash into over four thousand plastic bottles and used them as insulation for the walls of the library. Simon is now using this same method to construct a fence around the community garden. “It’s not so much a fence,” he explains, “as it is a way to build a bridge between the community and the center, teaching the children at the surrounding schools (those who are helping me fill the bottles with trash) about environmental stewardship, and as a way to attract potential donors to this center.”

Readers interested in donating to either Simon’s or Gabe’s projects, please contact Ben DeMarais at bdemarais@csbsju.edu.

AB

Mr. Ben DeMarais, a former Benedictine Volunteer in Tanzania, is a faculty resident of Saint John’s University.
Meet a Monk: J. P. Earls

Alberic Culhane, O.S.B.

Our confrere for over fifty years, John Patrick Earls (J. P.) was born in 1935 in San Angelo, Texas, the second son of Harry and Frances Earls whose extended families were known for their civic engagements in the city and county. Father J. P. completed his elementary and high school studies in San Angelo and earned his bachelor’s degree in English in 1957 at Saint Mary’s University, San Antonio.

After doing some substitute teaching, J. P. entered Saint John’s novitiate in 1960, made final vows on 11 July 1963, and was ordained a priest on 5 June 1965. Fair-skinned, blue-eyed, and bald before shaven heads became a minor monastic fashion, Father J. P. is soft-spoken and disciplined—rising well before morning prayer for personal exercise. By conviction a vegetarian, he is now of an age where it’s helpful—a nod to fading hearing—to have English subtitles, even with English language movies!

After being schooled in piano and cello, J. P. taught himself the viola. He has composed some aesthetic hymns for use in the liturgy and an elegant Sonatina for Piano, a three-movement work premiered locally by Professor Wim Ibes. To join him for an occasional movie or event is often to gain added perceptions. After seeing The King’s Speech, he noted the irony that all the music that created the mood of this patriotic British movie was composed by Germans — Beethoven et alii.”

Many of J. P.’s career turns could be considered seminal—monk-missionary and lower school principal in Mexico; chaplain to groups of women Benedictines; tenured teacher, chair of the university’s English department, and Outstanding Academic Advisor of 1990.

Scores of students and their parents came to know Father J. P. in 1973-80 when he served as university vice president for student affairs, while remaining a faculty resident in the dorms. Those were somewhat turbulent times for students generally, and more specifically for a group of active sports fans known as “the Rats,” a singularly enthusiastic “pep” section at athletic events. The Rats’ antics, entertaining in earlier years, occasionally coarsened over time, resulting in warnings that the increasingly rude, gendered, and other objectionable language and actions would not be tolerated.

In late fall 1976, after some flagrant actions and shouts, the Rats’ contretemps climaxed in the middle of a basketball game. Thus Father J. P., this Irish son who had been taught by his mother “never to create a scene,” gave an order, moved onto the basketball court, waited alone, unruffled and seemingly serene, until the offending fans and some of their supporters were escorted from Sexton Arena; the game then resumed.

To witness J. P.’s action that night was to witness impressive self-disregard by a natural introvert (which many a monk is) and, at the same time, to see realized what is often called the “grace of state”—the special added strength and clarity of action and speech made possible by the benevolent God to aid a human being in a demanding situation, especially one not of his choosing.
I came to Saint John’s because I wanted to be a priest who praised God in a liturgical community, taught English in a college, and played cello in a symphony orchestra. I no longer teach English or play the cello, but what is left is far more than enough. . . . The richness is people: those I have known from the beginning, as well as those I met along the way, but most especially those no longer here, brought to life in our midst by the stories we tell of them.

-- J. P. Earls, O.S.B.

Father J. P. recalled a meeting he and others of the executive staff had with Father Michael Blecker, O.S.B., then president, at an off-campus working retreat. When asked later how the marathon sessions were for him, he mused, “This is the first time I’ve seen the sun rise and set from the same chair.”

In more recent years, J. P. left teaching in the university for the yeoman service (2003—2008) as director of monastic formation for the abbey, a role of high importance to the life and continued well-being of the abbey because the formative guidance in the early years of a monk’s life is truly the bedrock foundation.

You’ve heard it said that “monks don’t retire,” and that’s often true. Especially noteworthy is the “volunteer life” Father J. P. leads nowadays. In any given week, he is asked, or simply volunteers, to do team-chaplain work, weekend assistance at a Minnesota parish, drive infirm monks to appointments, staff the abbey gift shop, give early morning service at the Great Hall Information Desk, be substitute prayer leader/Mass presider/cantor for liturgies, and a reader at monastic evening meals. Tennis, anyone?

AB

Father Alberic Culhane, O.S.B., is a faculty resident at Saint John’s University.
To explore a possible monastic vocation at Saint John’s Abbey, David Allen (24) and Richard Crawford (28) began a three-month candidacy program in February. They are living on the formation floor of the monastery with the novices and junior monks, and pray, eat, and recreate with the larger community.

Following graduation from Saint John’s University in 2009, majoring in theology and environmental studies, David served as a Benedictine Volunteer in Chile with the Manquehue Apostolic Movement, a lay Benedictine community. Upon his return to the U.S. he worked at Saint Boniface Church in Cold Spring, Minnesota.

When asked why he applied to Saint John’s, David explained: “I had positive experiences with Benedictines as a Saint John’s student, Benedictine Volunteer, and youth minister, and felt very ‘at home’ here. My friendships with members of the community really were life-changing, and I saw candidacy to be a natural and good step for me to take. Each experience I’ve had with the monks has been very helpful in my decision to try candidacy. The variety of ministries and experiences the monks have also made sense in the sort of work and life I see myself living. I am very happy to have this opportunity of prayer, work, discernment, and community life.”

Richard graduated from Saint John’s University in 2006 with a degree in theater. While an undergraduate he worked for fine arts programming and after graduation worked full-time as events coordinator. Richard was accepted as a monastic associate of the abbey a year ago and has been living with the monastic community while still working for fine arts programming.

Richard’s interest in Saint John’s and monastic life is part of his ongoing discernment: “I’m not sure what I’m called to do with my life. So far I have felt called here, as a student, an administrator, and now as a candidate for the monastery. I can explore where God is calling me, not by myself but with the collective knowledge and experiences of the community. By exploring life here I think I can best live the call to follow Christ.”

Should David and Richard continue to feel that they are being called to monastic life, and be accepted by the community, they will begin their novitiate year in September.

AB

Collegeville candidates Richard Crawford (left) and David Allen.

Brother Paul-Vincent Niebauer, O.S.B., is vocations director of Saint John’s Abbey.
March in Minnesota included the usual match between the lamb and the lion: snow and blustery winds alternated with bright sun and temperatures in the 40s. Before that, Saint John’s enjoyed/ endured an old-fashioned winter with lots of snow, lots of cold, and an occasional “snow day” without classes in the schools. The Collegeville squirrels tunneled through the snow banks in January and February; on the feast of Saint Joseph (19 March) a robin searched for food in the monastery’s backyard. We hope for an Easter without snow.

November 2010

- During much of November Abbot John Klassen was “down under” and “way out east” as he visited Australia and Japan. In Melbourne he gave presentations on the Eucharist as prayer, silence and contemplative prayer, and the spirituality and practice of Lectio divina to the local diocesan leadership, concluding with the Dom Helder Câmara lecture on 18 November. (The twenty-five-year-old lecture series, sponsored by the Marist Brothers, honors the legacy of the late Dom Helder Câmara, bishop of the Diocese of Recife, Brazil.) The abbot’s travels in Australia included time at the Cistercian Tarrawarra Abbey where he met the monks and also encountered a “fine herd of beef cattle.” Before departing for Japan, Abbot John gave a forty-five-minute interview to an Australian Broadcast Company (ABC) program on monastic life, faith, and the Church.

At Trinity Benedictine Monastery in Fujimi, Japan, the abbot presided at the first profession of Novices Andrew Lam Hong Ching, John Chrysostom Long Liting, and Maria Dominic Takahashi Hidenori on the feast of Christ the King, 21 November. Abbot John also met with each member of the Japan priory for an annual “check-in” and gave a talk on centering prayer to the monastic community. He even enjoyed a “fabulous” American-style Thanksgiving dinner prepared by Prior Roman Paur and Brother Isaac Connolly.

- A controlled deer hunt took place in the Saint John’s Abbey woods during the first weekend of November. Some thirty hunters, selected through a lottery system, took nineteen deer. The abbey’s land manager and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources have advised the community that the vegetation of the forest cannot be sustained unless the size of the deer herd is reduced.

- Saint John’s Preparatory School presented its Armor of
Oblate Ms. Angie Del Greco made her solemn profession as a hermit of the Diocese of Saint Cloud at the community Eucharist on 17 December. Abbot John, delegated by Bishop John Kinney to receive her profession of vows, presided at the Eucharist.

A festive reception coordinated by Brother Ælred Senna followed in the Great Hall for dozens of guests, members of the monastic community, and Angie’s faithful hearing-ear service dog, Caritas.

Light award posthumously to Father James Tingerthal, O.S.B., during the annual Legacy Dinner on 13 November.

December 2010

• Following a concert of sacred music featuring the Abbey Schola and The St. John’s Boys’ Choir, the monastic community was joined by several hundred friends and neighbors for the celebration of the Christmas Eve Eucharist. A reception with light refreshments followed in the Great Hall. On Christmas Day the monastic community and the local parish celebrated a morning “Hymn Eucharist.”

• It was not fireworks but waterworks that added a dramatic ending to 2010 for Novices Theophane Windschitl and Eric Pohlman. On the morning of 31 December a sprinkler pipe in the attic above the novitiate living quarters burst and within a few minutes thousands of gallons of water were rushing through the attic floor, the novitiate (third floor), the abbey’s retirement center (second floor), to the Saint John’s Health Center clinic (first floor). The community’s laundry room, in the basement, was dry.

Following weeks of repairs, repainting, recarpeting, and refurbishing, the novitiate was made inhabitable again. On 10 February, feast of Saint Scholastica (patron saint of rainfall), the last of the renovation work was completed, and the novices returned to their recreation room to the accompaniment of Handel’s Water Music.

• In December Brother Kenneth Kroeker, R.N., completed many years of generous service to his confreres and the wider community as a nurse in the Saint John’s Health Center clinic. After a time for personal renewal and a short sabbatical, Brother Ken will begin work as a health-care staff accountant with the responsibility of reducing the cost of the community’s health care.

• The monastic community welcomed in the new year with a gathering for conversation, board games, and delicious food. (Actually, when the midnight hour arrived, most of the monks were already asleep, satisfied that if the new year had arrived on the East Coast at 11:00 Minnesota time, it would get here eventually.) The fare included homemade pizza prepared by Brothers John Brudney, Dennis Beach, and David-Paul Lange, and Father Geoffrey Fecht. In addition to the standard pepperoni or sausage, the toppings also included a variety of cheeses and herbs as well as artichokes, sun-dried tomatoes, and olives.

Brother Dennis Beach (left), Father Geoffrey Fecht, and Brother John Brudney place New Year’s Eve pizzas in the oven.
January 2011

• On 6 January (real Epiphany), confreres and members of the local community were warmly welcomed by Father Hilary Thimmesh (director) and Ms. Gloria Hardy (events and program coordinator) to the newly renovated world headquarters of the Benedictine Institute on the second floor of the quadrangle. Father Mark Thamert prepared Austro-Hungarian imperial crêpes, *mit schlag*, for the open house of the institute.

• During the community’s annual observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18-25 January), Pastor Stephen J. Cornils, Christian education director at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, preached at the Sunday (23 January) Eucharist. Later that day more than five hundred people took part in Hymnfest, featuring The St. John’s Boys’ Choir, accompanied by gospel singer Jearlyn Steele.

• The board of advisors and leadership team of Liturgical Press met with the monastery’s senior council to discuss the rapidly changing environment in the publishing industry—over fifty percent of books sold by Amazon.com and other outlets are now electronic—and to consider how the advisory board could assist Liturgical Press in carrying out the work of the abbey’s publishing apostolate. Members of the advisory board commented on the significant decrease in Church attendance and the impact this is having on Catholic publishing. This is especially prevalent among men and women in their twenties. The board will reflect on what kind of materials the Press might produce and in what form so as to reach these individuals.

February 2011

• To celebrate the feast of Saint Scholastica, the Sisters of Saint Benedict’s Monastery, Saint Joseph, welcomed, with their usual gracious hospitality, a busload of monks on Sunday, 13 February, for evening prayer and supper. After the meal, the program consisted of Prioress Nancy Bauer speaking a few words: there will be no program this evening! Enjoy the dessert. A good time was had by all.

March 2011

• On 2 March Saint John’s Preparatory School learned that it is now recognized as an International Baccalaureate (IB) school, the only such school in central Minnesota and the only Catholic school in the state offering the IB diploma. The internationally recognized curriculum challenges students with higher academic standards.

AB

Madonna with Child, bronze statue by sculptor Alexander Tylevich that has graced the Stella Maris Chapel since it was renovated in 2007, was honored with a 2010 Merit Award by *Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture.* The renovation of the chapel on Lake Sagatagan was undertaken through the generosity of Don and Marion Hall, under the direction of Northfield, Minnesota, architect Ed Sovik.
Excerpted from *The Record*, official newspaper of Saint John’s University:

20 January 1961:

- [Saint Paul] television station KTCA will present lecturers from the Saint John’s faculty on the subject “History of Christian Architecture” in an [18-program] educational series beginning January 25. The speakers will be Fathers Cloud Meinberg, O.S.B., Brice Howard, O.S.B., Aelred Tegels, O.S.B., Alberic Culhane, O.S.B., and Mr. Gordon Goettemann. The lectures will concern philosophy of art, the theological basis of art, and Jewish and Old Testament art. Along with these will be a survey of all architecture from pre-Christian times to the present. The new abbey and university church will be discussed in one of the later programs.

- Saint John’s Abbey and University Church was included in an article on new churches appearing in the December 26 issue of *Time* magazine. The article, accompanied by a full color picture of the bell banner, commented on the “audacity in design” made possible by modern technology.

24 February 1961:

- Father Basil Shereghy, S.T.D., will celebrate a Byzantine Rite Mass in the university gymnasium on Thursday, March 2, in the language of Church Slavonic. Celebration of the Mass at Saint John’s is in line with the wishes of recent popes who have been at pains to acquaint Latin Rite Catholics with the rites other than their own.

10 March 1961:

- Saint John’s is seeking accreditation for an M.A. in religion to be conferred especially upon sisters, teachers in high schools, and seminarians who will work in Catholic schools.

- [Campus radio station] KSJU will launch its seventh year of broadcasting from behind the pine curtain on March 12. The evening programming features music especially designed for the study hours. . . . KSJU is equipped with the latest in stereo phonographs, professional tape recorders, and automatic audio switching equipment. “KSJU stresses the better things in music—adult college listening. . . . Rock ‘n roll is excluded.”

21 April 1961:

- Father Warren [John] Kulas, O.S.B., professor of German at Saint John’s, has been awarded a National Defense Fellowship for study in German languages and literature at George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

- Fortified with facts like “United States citizens are spending ten billion dollars a year for medical care at a cost of $294 for every family,” the Saint John’s debate team will advocate a program of compulsory health insurance at next week’s home audience debate against Marquette University.

**An open letter to the boys on fourth floor Benet:**

“I want to say thank you very, very much from the bottom of my heart for a Christmas gift . . . . It made me into a strong feeling, and also it makes me feel a warm friendship in a foreign country. Now I know what the Johnny Spirit is and I will get along well at St. John’s University.” —Tadashi Yokota

Editor’s note: . . . The freshman students of fourth floor Benet and their prefect, Father Titus [Tom] Thole, O.S.B., presented Tadashi Yokota, a student from Tokyo, the gift of a round-trip ticket to New York City to visit relatives over Christmas vacation.
The aroma of baking bread wafts through the monastery as Brother Paul Richards, O.S.B., has several loaves of crusty artisan bread in the oven of the formation floor kitchen. A few years ago his confere Father Timo Backous, O.S.B., suggested that keeping an aquarium, directing the Abbey Schola, helping with housekeeping, and running the formation program were not enough to keep him sufficiently busy, and he needed a hobby. Father Timo may have been facetious, but Brother Paul decided to take up baking anyway. Now the monks in formation at Saint John’s—and, on occasion, the whole community—reap the benefits of his new hobby.

Brother Paul undertook this task by looking up The New York Times no-knead bread recipe but concluded that the original was too fussy, so he adapted and streamlined it. The most recent adaptation includes a hefty measure of Swany White Flour Mills’ nine-grain flour, made in Freeport, Minnesota. The result is an aromatic, chewy, moderately dense bread that is perfect for a simple supper of soup and bread.

For several years now Brother Paul has provided the community with bread for the Thanksgiving meal—his own milk-bread knotted rolls. Those men whom he has helped shape in formation help him shape some fifteen dozen of the melt-in-your-mouth rolls. The oven-fresh treats arrive just as the turkey is being brought to the monastic refectory for carving. Nothing could be better!

Brother Paul does not live by bread alone. He has been known to bake a pie or a cake as dessert for his (in)famous etiquette dinners. And one of his favorite entrées is “Pot Roast Joann,” a recipe he adapted from Ms. Joann Weber, executive director of The St. John’s Boys’ Choir, an organization he founded in 1981. So many talents, so little time!

AB

**Brother Paul’s Milk Bread Rolls (1 dozen)**

Combine 1 package active dry yeast with 3 T. warm water to dissolve. Add 1 cup warm milk (110°F), 5 T. melted butter, 3 T. sugar, 1 egg, and 1 t. salt. Mix to combine. Gradually add 3½ to 4 cups bread flour to make a moist but not sticky dough. Knead about 10 minutes. Transfer to an oiled bowl and allow to rise, covered, until doubled. Punch down and refrigerate, covered, about 30 minutes. Shape dough into rolls and allow to rise on a baking sheet until doubled. Bake at 425°F for about 15 minutes.
Please join the monastic community in prayerful remembrance of our recently deceased family and friends:

Madeleine Beaumont
Sister Joan Braun, O.S.B.
Raymond Cormier
Ben Dobos
John Dowal
Sister Clarissa Fink, O.S.B.
Sister Harriet Gobel, O.S.B.
Stephen Hartung
Brother Mark Hayden, O.S.B.
Doris Bartl Healy
Sister Verena Kaiser, O.S.B.
James Kelly
Sister Aurelianne Kelsch, O.S.B.
Mary A. Kennedy
Sister Timothy Kirby, O.S.B.
Dick Kleespie
Father Omer Kline, O.S.B.
Lawrence Korte
Helen Kramer
Dorothy Kwatera
Edward LaFond
Lee Launderville
Gerald Madsen
Sister Marette Malley, O.S.B.
Mary McDonald
Bernard T. Morgan
Barbara Nistler
Janelle Pekula
Sister Lea Pocta, O.S.B.
Sister Bertrand Reiser, O.S.B.
Dennis Rice
John Richards
Patsy Ricke
Jane Salier
Sister Elaine Schindler, O.S.B.
Father Roman Schneider, O.S.B.
Hirono Takahashi
Keiko Takahashi
Mayuko Takahashi
Richard Joseph Teal
Brother William Uiting, O.S.B.

Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.

—Psalm 116:15
Of the many stories in Scripture that reveal the vulnerable nature of human beings, one of my favorites is that of the ascension. Once Jesus is taken up to heaven, an angel asks the disciples, “Why are you standing there looking up?” The earthly ministry of Jesus is over, but they have yet to grasp that fact. We don’t know if they are simply overwhelmed by the experience, confused, or just slow to get moving. Whatever the case, theirs is a very natural and human response.

When events in our life are truly remarkable, we want them to linger awhile. The relentless march of time is something we’d like to control but can’t. It takes us a long time to lose the glow of our wedding day, our profession ceremony, or any other rite of passage. Even the special attention on our birthdays is nice while it lasts, and we’d like it to last longer. But the reality of “ordinary” time and life quickly takes up where it left off, and we must shake off the tendency to stand there and hope for more.

We experience this same kind of phenomenon throughout the liturgical rhythm of the church year. Who wouldn’t like Christmas to last a few more days? And after the spare silence of Lent, who isn’t happy to see the flowers and colors of an Easter church? Who wouldn’t want those aspects of liturgy that inspire and stimulate us to last a bit longer? Yet, just like those disciples looking up to heaven, we too must walk down the mountain and once again immerse ourselves in the day-to-day grind. Humans aren’t meant for sustained spiritual highs. We certainly need them, but we can’t linger there. We may wince at the thought of the Easter season coming to an end, but if it didn’t, its special nature would lose its power.

The ordinary flow of life can be a gift because it helps us appreciate and understand the joy of the extraordinary. So too can our liturgical life be enhanced by a rhythm of highs and lows. They remind us that what we seek is an interior transformation that glows with the power of the resurrection. If we cultivate that truth deep in our souls, it will last long after the Christmas tree or the Easter lilies have gone from our sight.

Father Timothy Backous, O.S.B., is headmaster of Saint John’s Preparatory School.
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Abbey Banner

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22 Meet a Monk: J. P. Earls
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24 New Collegeville Candidates
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25 Abbey Chronicle and Fifty Years Ago
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29 Monks in the Kitchen:
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30 In Memoriam

31 Spiritual Life: After the Holidays
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