



*"Ut In Omnibus Glorificetur Deus."
"That in all things may God be glorified."
(1 Peter 4:11)*

St. Peter's Abbey Newsletter

Vol. 38 No. 1 Summer and Fall 2017



*"Ora et Labora"
"Prayer and Work"
(Benedictine Motto)*

Fr. Lawrence celebrates 60 years of monastic life

What inspires people to join religious life? And how do religious persevere in their vocation? Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, a Benedictine monk of St. Peter's Abbey for 60 years, has insight into this question. He renewed his vows, July 11, after Br. Benedict van Ginkel, OSB took his solemn vows to begin his first year as a solemnly professed monk.

"I would have to begin with my parents who worked hard to be faithful, and faith-filled," Fr. Lawrence commented when asked who inspired him to become

a Benedictine of St. Peter's Abbey. "Pastors, too, like Fr. George Brodner, OSB and Fr. Alphonse Ludwig, OSB were models for me. I would have to say that all people who have come to the abbey, even those who left after a period of monasticism, have inspired me. I have tried to see the positive side of people and perhaps that sounds naive, but isn't it really true, that even the most 'off the wall' people in our lives have something to give us, even those who choose to despise us, persecute us, provided we learn to see

with the eyes of the Lord Jesus."

Shortly after joining St. Peter's Abbey, Fr. Lawrence was sent to St. John's Abbey, Minnesota to enroll in the formation (novitiate) program where he received instruction in monastic life. He was the only novice at St. Peter's Abbey. He returned to the abbey to make his first (simple) vows on July 11, 1957. Three years later, he celebrated his final (solemn) vows on July 11, 1960.

Continued on page 5



NEW SEASON – The shadows on the paths of St. Peter's Abbey lengthen as autumn sets in. Leaves, cut off from life, transform the ground into majestic shades of gold. Lower temperatures and shorter daylight hours signal the entrance into another season and prepare us for the final season of the year – a season of hope. The cold and darkness of winter always give way to new life in the spring.

A message from Abbot Peter's desk

2017 features a couple of significant jubilees.

One of them is the 150th anniversary of Confederation, the formation of Canada on July 1, 1867. There have been celebrations across the country, though more low key than the 100th anniversary in 1967.

Another jubilee this year is the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, initiated by Martin Luther in 1517. Historical research has shown that much of the controversy of that time could have been avoided if the different parties had followed St. Benedict's advice in his Rule: Listen. The polemics of the day did not encourage careful listening to what one's opponents were saying. Today's Pope Francis would have added another admonition – listen first, then dialogue.

This past year has seen some significant events here at St. Peter's as well. In our annual chapter meeting, Oct. 27, 2016, the monastic community decided to cease publication of the Prairie Messenger in May of 2018. That will complete 95 volumes of the weekly Catholic newspaper, begun in English in 1922. The decision was spurred by changing technology, loss of subscribers (to 4,000), and a looming debt for the paper. The announcement has spurred many letters to the editor lamenting the loss of their spiritual nourishment.



KC CONVENTION – Abbot Peter joined the procession of bishops at the annual Knights of Columbus supreme convention in St. Louis, Missouri at the beginning of August 2017.

St. Peter's College had a good year in 2016-17, with close to 150 students registered for first- and second-year classes. Fundraising for the renovated Michael Hall has gone well, according to the Growing in Faith campaign. The \$4 million debt will soon be covered by generous donors. It will also be a relief to the monastic community to see that mission accomplished. Student scholarships also

benefitted greatly from the campaign.

Weather is a continuing source of concern worldwide. Unfamiliar and erratic weather patterns around the world are showing the effects of climate change. We have been fortunate in our area of Saskatchewan, which is mainly a rural area. We've enjoyed good weather this summer and farmers are reporting good crops this fall. We've had excellent harvesting weather, a real change from last year.

Other parts of the province have not been so fortunate, especially in the south which has suffered a drought. Meanwhile this summer has seen many forest fires in British Columbia.

This has created a renewed interest in becoming more sustainable in our energy usage at the abbey. The monastic community has already responded with more energy-efficient windows in our buildings, as well as better insulated outer walls, thanks to Br. Wolfgang a few years ago. Conversion to more efficient LED lights is also part of our agenda.

This has led to a growing interest in solar energy. Fr. Lawrence and Br. Basil accompanied Rob Harasymchuk, St. Peter's College president, to the annual meeting of the Association of Benedic-



RETREAT – Abbot Peter led a retreat in May of 2017 for the Benedictine Sisters in Winnipeg.

Continued on page 4

Br. Benedict makes solemn vows at St. Peter's

“Since Br. Benedict is a musician, I think he wanted to provide a prelude to today’s celebration. And we had that prelude last night, orchestrated by God. What a sound and light show we had,” Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB said, in his address, July 11, to the Solemn Vows of Br. Benedict van Ginkel. A thunderstorm, the previous night, lit up the sky and brought welcome rain after weeks of hot, dry weather. The day was special for Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB who was solemnly professed, 60 years earlier, and renewed his Profession of Vows.

“It struck me that when we look back in history, St. Benedict would have been about the same age as Br. Benedict is now when he wrote his Rule at Monte Cassino. We know from the document itself that two major sources guided his Rule. The first was the Bible and the second was his own experience of living as a hermit and then living in community,” Abbot Peter said in Sts. Peter and Paul Church.

St. Benedict followed the same advice of St. John XXIII, when St. John served as pope and had the motto: see everything, overlook a great deal and correct a little. St. Benedict would agree that this wisdom summarizes his Rule. Pope Gregory the Great wrote that St. Benedict saw much around him. He went to Rome as a young man to study and became disgusted by the violence and immorality. St. Benedict sought refuge in a cave in Subiaco and then went to Monte Cassino where he wrote his famous Rule, a guide that changed the course of history in Europe.

St. Benedict overlooked many things that happened around him. He lived among many personalities in his community and he adjusted for them, Abbot Peter remarked. St. Benedict said the abbot should arrange everything to allow the strong to have something to yearn for and the weak to be free from having to leave.

Commenting on the readings, Abbot Peter said St. Paul illustrated the wisdom of the Rule when he spoke of letting love



MONASTIC VOWS – Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB congratulates Br. Benedict van Ginkel, OSB, left, on his solemn vows, July 11, at St. Peter’s Abbey, and Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB on his 60th year of profession as a Benedictine monk of St. Peter’s Abbey.

be genuine. Love, above all, overlooks what’s on the surface and sees the deeper reality of each person. St. Paul spoke of rejoicing in hope, being patient in suffering, persevering in prayer and extending hospitality to strangers.

The central vow of St. Benedict is “conversion of life,” Abbot Peter commented. People may begin a vocation with a lot of enthusiasm and then find life tedious and boring. Conversion is difficult because it begins with a new vision and new possibilities.

“Br. Benedict, we ask you, today, to consider well the covenant you are about to enter with the Lord. Angels are present here taking note of it, and you will have to give an account of it at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I set before you today a way of life which images that of the Lord himself. To embrace it, you must leave all else aside. Yet this very renunciation, which is evidence of dying to ourselves, at the same time, proclaims the victory of Christ’s cross.”

Br. Benedict, 55, was born in Winnipeg and named Peter by his parents August and Josephine. He has one brother and three sisters. In 1983, he

began teaching piano lessons after earning his Grade 10 in piano. In 1987, Br. Benedict earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English and Psychology at the University of Manitoba. In 1993, he earned his Bachelor of Music in Music Education at the University of Saskatchewan. He received his Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto as a piano teacher. Br. Benedict taught English to junior and high school students in Winnipeg for three years and classroom music for 19 years. In 2012, he received a diploma for teaching French immersion. He taught French for eight years, while also teaching music.

“Mom has always encouraged me to keep praying and search for peace in life. I have many role models, including saints, who have inspired me in my teaching,” he said. Among them are Sts. Benedict and Scholastica. In 2014, Br. Benedict was professed as a monk at St. Peter’s Abbey where he chose the name Benedict. He serves as the abbey organist, accounts payable clerk in the business office and assistant in the library. He is studying to be a library technician.

Oblates are welcome presence at St. Peter's

The Oblates of St. Peter's Abbey are a blessing to the Benedictines and their presence, prayers and support have always been greatly appreciated, according to Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB, Oblate director. Oblates are lay persons who are attached to a Benedictine community and strive to live the Rule of St. Benedict in the world. New members are always welcome, he said.

Since becoming Oblate director in 2010, Fr. Paul has been edified to be able to meet the Oblates and welcome new members to the abbey. Many have said that they are pleased to know the monks are praying for them. Some Oblates enjoy visiting the abbey and helping with work, whether in gardening, lawn or court yard maintenance. Others have volunteered with mailing out Oblate and abbey newsletters and looking after the Oblate library.

The financial support of Oblates has been used to fund a handicap lift, new windows and a new heating system for the abbey. One Oblate donated haskap plants which are used to grow haskap that is made into jam. Another used her expertise in monastic prayer and computers to simplify the monastic prayer books. She assists the Oblate director in managing the Oblate files and records.

Abbot Peter's desk

Continued from page 2

tine Colleges and Universities at St. John's Abbey in Minnesota, June 1-4. St. John's has a new solar energy farm of 25 acres and the trio had a tour and explanation of the project while there. I hope it becomes feasible for us to implement a similar project here in the future.

I would like to close with a word of thanks to the many volunteers – Benedictine Oblates and others – who come to spend some time at the abbey and work with us in our ministries. It is also gratifying to have some neighbours join us regularly for daily Mass or prayers. And we are thankful to our benefactors who think of us when they are making out donations.

We pray that God bless all of you.

Please see our abbey website: stpetersabbey.ca



OBLATE – Oblate Annette Zawada of St. Gregor shows a bird feeder she donated to the abbey court yard. Annette is a generous volunteer at the abbey. One of her projects is helping keep the court yard looking neat and trim.

“All the volunteer work means so much to our community of 15 which isn't able to keep up to the demands it once did with many more members,” Fr. Paul commented. There are presently 75 Benedictine Oblates attached to St. Peter's Abbey who live primarily in Saskatchewan. The remainder reside in communities across Canada. There is one Oblate of St. Peter's Abbey who lives in the United States.

Oblates are invited to meet three times a year at the abbey on Oblate Day which is held on a Saturday. The gatherings give the Oblates the opportunity to celebrate Lauds (morning praise), Mass and Vespers (evening prayer) with the Benedictines and socialize with them at dinner. Meetings are held in the afternoon where everyone is invited to listen to one or two guest-speakers. The topics are always about an aspect of the Rule of St. Benedict. Newsletters are sent to the Oblates informing them of upcoming Oblate Days and they usually have stories on presentations at previous Oblate gatherings.

Oblates are invited to attend special liturgies at St. Peter's Abbey on the feasts of St. Benedict and other special occasions. Many Oblates are not able to participate in Oblate gatherings at St. Peter's Abbey. Oblates are always welcome to become involved in monastic

life, indirectly, through their apostolic witness at home and work.

Oblates of Saint Benedict are Christian men and women who associate themselves with a Benedictine religious community to strengthen their baptism and enrich their Christian way of life. Oblates do not take vows or live in a monastery. They make promises to live the Rule of St. Benedict which immerses them in the Gospel. People of all Christian backgrounds may become Oblates.

The word “Oblate” comes from the Latin *offero* (to offer). Families once offered their sons and daughters to monasteries and convents for religious education and vocational training. These children were called Oblates. Adults eventually expressed the desire to live the spirituality of the Rule of St. Benedict outside monasteries. They, too, became Oblates as adults in their own homes and communities. An Oblate may support a monastic community through public witness, prayer, volunteer work or financial contributions.

Oblates, like Benedictine monks, seek a balance of prayer and work in their lives. They strive to live by the Benedictine motto: *Ora et Labora* – Prayer and Work. They follow the Benedictine motto: *Ut In Omnibus Glorificetur Deus* – That in all things may God be glorified. (1 Peter 4:11)

Fr. Lawrence celebrates 60 years of monastic life

Continued from page 1

The meaning of the ceremony's prayers of dying to the world was deepened when he learned that a cousin, who suffered from spinal meningitis, had died. Fr. Lawrence wrote on a slip of paper, 'To God, David and Lawrence' and placed the paper in a pocket of his monastic habit. The prayer was later sent to the bereaved parents, his Uncle Matt and Aunt Viola DeMong. Fr. Lawrence read his vows and then acted on them in a dramatic way by lying on the sanctuary floor. A black funeral pall was draped over him and it was framed by six wooden candlesticks. Candles glowed as the Litany of the Saints was recited.

The vocation to monastic life was challenged during the turbulent years of the 1960s when religious communities went through changes inspired by Vatican II. Many religious left and some who exited St. Peter's Abbey were close friends of Fr. Lawrence. The biggest challenges were embracing issues that "went against the grain," Fr. Lawrence said. He often faced disappointments, but the frustrations taught him more about obedience than lectures, books or even the witness of other monks.

In 1963, Fr. Lawrence was ordained to the priesthood. The following year he attended Laval University, Montreal for a Master's Degree in French. He worked very hard and finished his studies early. The next stage of the program was teaching French at St. Peter's College. However, due to a miscommunication someone else was assigned. Abbot Jerome Weber, OSB told him to return to Laval University and continue in the Master's Program.

"I got on to the train to Quebec City, a very unhappy and angry monk. All the while, I did have one tiny light of hope. I had remembered a sign on campus with an arrow and the word 'Catechèse'. So the first thing I did after arriving with no student residence reservation was to register both with Catechetics and the two-year program in French." He studied both French and Catechetics after being informed by Fr. Vincent Morrison, college principal, that Catechetics would count for Education class credits.

"Amazingly, that year so changed my



PRESENTS HOMILY – Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB enjoys using posters and other visual aids with his homilies. He was the guest homilist for the Mount Carmel Sunday Mass in July.

life and so transformed my thinking that I had to admit that every subsequent year began to be the best year of my life. And all because I reluctantly obeyed my superiors and ended up allowing someone else, like with poor St. Peter, to put a belt around me and lead me where I would rather not have gone."

In 1982, Fr. Lawrence felt the call to help at the National Office of Religious Education "in spite of all the negative feelings and a repeated dream of walking into the mouth of a lion." In 1998, he was asked to leave St. Augustine's Parish in Humboldt and replace Fr. Emile April in União dos Palmares, Brazil for a sabbatical year.

"Initially I accepted with no problem, but as it drew nearer I began feeling really negative and when the final week came the Gospel contained the precise reading about St. Peter. Because I confessed to the congregation what I was going through, the parish actually gave me a belt with that text reference printed inside. In effect, I fully expected to not make it home alive. And that year did have some high drama, including the escape from a 2 1/2 meter coconut branch falling exactly where I

had been standing a split second before." Fr. Lawrence feared for his safety after raising the ire of the landowners by defending the "landless". He wrote up a "last will and testament" should he be killed.

Reflecting on the past 60 years, Fr. Lawrence said the use of the vernacular, rather than Latin, in the divine office (monastic prayers) has been very positive for monastic life. He was happy when 'lay brothers' were permitted to pray divine office with the priests, make solemn vows and join the monastic chapter (solemnly professed monks) for decision-making.

After Vatican II, the monks learned about the ancient formula, *ecclesia semper reformanda* (The church must always be in a process of reform and change). The monk is on a path of *conversatio morum* (constant conversion) as he learns obedience and discipline. The words discipline and disciple are interlinked, he remarked. A disciple is open to be transformed into the image of Jesus, as he lives for others.

"Monastic communities could really be attractive places if we all lived these vows to the full," he commented.

People and events around the abbey

2016

Sept. 2 – The students of St. Peter’s College were welcomed back to another year of studies at Orientation Day. Teachers and staff gave presentations, tours of the college and served lunch. The college registered 140 full and part-time students.

Sept. 23-26 – Abbot Peter and Kathy Tumback, business manager, attended the annual ATRI meeting for finance officers and religious superiors in Ottawa. Abbot Peter then attended the annual meeting of the Canadian bishops in Cornwall, Ontario, Sept. 26-30.

Sept. 24—Students were honored at the annual St. Peter’s College Scholarships and Awards Day. Fifty-five students received more than \$70,000 worth of awards. The awards ranged from \$250 to \$7,000. Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB took photos of the presentations and asked the blessing before the noon luncheon.

Oct. 3-5 – The Anglicans from the Diocese of Saskatchewan held their annual clergy retreat at the abbey. They joined the Benedictines for Vespers.



MEDIEVAL FEAST – Rob Harasymchuk, president of St. Peter’s College, serves Br. Kurt Van Kuren, OSB during the annual Medieval Feast. Br. Kurt was one of the performers of the event that was held in February.

Oct. 4 – The first snowfall came for the fall season. Snow was wet and accompanied by wind.

Oct. 4 – Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB presented a PowerPoint to the monastic community on the Abbots Congress he attended in Rome.

Oct. 5 – Heavy snowfall put a damper on the Annual Opportunities Edge – Career Fair, sponsored by St. Peter’s College. The fair was held in the college gymnasium and attended by 250 students of the Horizon School Division, about half the number expected.

Oct. 6 – Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB, chair of campus ministry, presented a PowerPoint on the history of the Benedictines and St. Peter’s College, to 25 students and staff of St. Peter’s College. Fr. Demetrius Wasyluniuk, OSB and Br. Pierre Rouillard, OSB of campus ministry were in attendance.

Oct. 12 – Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB and Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB attended a celebration at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, Saskatoon honoring Bishop Donald Bolen. Bishop Donald was recognized on his 25th anniversary to his priesthood and he was given a farewell as bishop of the Saskatoon Diocese.

Oct. 14 – Bishop Donald Bolen was installed as archbishop of the Archdiocese of Regina at Holy Rosary Cathedral. Attending were: Abbot Peter, Fr. Demetrius and Fr. Richard Meidl, OSB.



REPAIR COLLEGE ROOF – A crane supports a worker on the college roof during January when repairs were made to the roof.



ADDRESSES STUDENTS – Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR, addresses students and staff of St. Peter’s College at a campus ministry luncheon in January. He discussed the Idolatry of Technology.

Oct. 20 – An earthquake destroyed the Basilica of St. Benedict in Norcia, Italy. The church was built over the site of the home where St. Benedict and his twin sister St. Scholastica once lived. They were born in 480. The basilica and adjacent monastery complex date to the 13th century.

Oct. 21 – Abbot Peter and Br. Basil Schaan, OSB attended a celebration at

St. Francis Xavier Parish, Saskatoon honoring the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) on their 200th anniversary.

Oct. 23 – Br. Anthony Nguyen, OSB was honored at Holy Trinity Parish in Regina on his 25th anniversary to monastic profession. Abbot Peter represented St. Peter’s Abbey. A luncheon, attended by 150, was held afterwards.

Oct. 27 – The monastic community voted, at a chapter meeting, to close the Prairie Messenger and St. Peter’s Press in May of 2018. Declining subscriptions and revenue were the reasons cited for the future closure.

Oct. 28 – Abbot Peter attended the Knights of Columbus 3rd Annual Celebrity Dinner Event at Holy Family Cathedral.

Oct. 29 – Oblate Edgar Neudorf of Saskatoon was the guest speaker at Oblate Day which began with Mass, followed by a dinner with the monks. Neudorf spoke to 35 about his pilgrimage (Way of St. James) in Spain.

Nov. 2 – Abbot Peter co-chaired the annual meeting of the bishops and religious superiors of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

Nov. 18 – Rev. Colin Clay of Saskatoon addressed 35 students and staff of St. Peter’s College at a noon luncheon on the topic of cults. Clay, 84, an expert on cults, has published books and articles on the topic. The luncheon was sponsored by St. Peter’s College Campus Ministry. Fr. Paul, chairman, Fr. Demetrius and Br. Pierre Rouillard, OSB represented campus ministry.

Continued on page 8



KITCHEN RENOVATIONS – The abbey kitchen floor was removed and replaced by a new floor during April of 2017.



KITCHEN WORKER – Br. Kurt Van Kuren, OSB washes dishes in the abbey refectory during the renovations of the abbey kitchen which took place in April. A new floor was installed in the kitchen. Renovations were completed in May.

People and events around the abbey

Continued from page 7

Nov. 24 – Fr. Richard Meidl, OSB presided at the funeral of his mother, Harlinda, at St. Viator's RC Church, Dauphin, Manitoba. Harlinda, 99, was born on Jan. 2, 1917. Abbot Peter and Fr. John Legitimas concelebrated.

Nov. 30 – The monastic community watched the first of eight DVDs on the Holy Land. The presentations were on Wednesday evenings during Advent and Lent.

Dec. 26 – Family Day was celebrated at St. Peter's Abbey by the Benedictines and their relatives.

2017

Jan. 11 – Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR, of the Eparchy of Saskatoon, addressed the students and staff of St. Peter's College at a luncheon, sponsored by campus ministry. The theme of his talk was: "The Idolatry of Technology".

Jan. 27-29 – St. Thomas More College of Saskatoon held its annual retreat at St. Peter's Abbey.

Jan. 31 – A Solidarity Vigil was hosted by St. Peter's College student govern-



SENIOR MONKS – Fr. Joseph Ackerman, OSB, left and Br. Wolfgang, OSB, are the senior monks of St. Peter's Abbey. Both are 93 years-old.

ment. The vigil was in response to the attack at a mosque in Quebec City. Fr. Paul, chair of campus ministry, led the vigil prayers.

Feb. 15 – The Annual Medieval Feast was celebrated by 70 students and staff of St. Peter's College (SPC) and guests of St. Peter's Abbey Guest Wing. The annual event was sponsored by SPC campus ministry. Participants dressed in

medieval costumes and enjoyed a festive medieval banquet with music and entertainment.

Feb. 17-20 – Abbot Peter attended an Abbots' and Priors' Workshop at Prince of Peace Abbey, California.

Feb. 21-24 – Abbot Peter attended the Assembly of Western Bishops meeting in Victoria, B.C. He is secretary for the region.

March 2 – Elder James Burns of James Smith Reserve addressed native spirituality to students and staff of St. Peter's College at a luncheon sponsored by campus ministry.

March 3-13 – Fr. Paul led a Lenten retreat at St. Mary's Parish, Rome, Georgia. The parish priest, Fr. Rafael Carbello, celebrates three English Masses and two Spanish Masses every weekend. Fr. Paul presided at the English Masses. Fr. Rafael is a seminary classmate of Fr. Paul.

March 10-11 – The Saskatchewan Knights of Columbus held a Spiritual Enrichment Weekend at St. Augustine Parish, Humboldt and St. Peter's Abbey, attended by 60.



VESPERS IN CEMETERY – The monks celebrated Vespers in the cemetery during their annual retreat in May.



93RD BIRTHDAY — Br. Wolfgang Thiem, OSB serves himself a piece of his birthday cake, April 28, celebrating his 93rd birthday.

March 10-12 – Abbot Peter gave a lenten parish retreat in Shellbrook and Leask, Sask.

March 18 – Oblate Day was held at St. Peter’s Abbey. The Oblates listened to a DVD presentation on *lectio divina* (spiritual reading).

March 23-April 2 – Abbot Peter joined the Western Canadian bishops on their *ad limina* visit to Rome. They met with Pope Francis and members of about 12 congregations in Rome.

March 24-26 – Catholic Engagement Encounter held its Western District Meeting at St. Peter’s Abbey.

April 21-23 – Seven couples attended Engagement Encounter at St. Peter’s Abbey. Fr. Demetrius and Fr. Paul were among the facilitators.

April 28 – Br. Wolfgang Thiem, OSB celebrated his 93rd birthday. Among the guests was his cousin, Gisbert Thiem of Germany.

April 30 – A closing Mass was held at Muenster Chapel by St. Peter’s Parish. The chapel was built in 1962 and was used for weekday Masses. The chapel was sold, May 5, to Joseph Scheiber of Humboldt.



WATERS SUNFLOWERS – Br. Wolfgang Thiem, OSB, waters sunflowers on a warm summer day. Br. Wolfgang also raises tomatoes in a greenhouse.

April 30 – St. Peter’s Chorus presented a 50th Anniversary Celebration Concert at St. Peter’s Parish. Fr. Paul was among the choir of 60. Abbot Peter and some former choir members joined the choir for the four last hymns. The choir presented a concert in Lanigan on April 28 and held a 50th anniversary banquet, April 29, at St. Augustine Parish Hall, Humboldt.

May 1 – Abbot Peter and Fr. Richard, parish priest in Watrous, attended the diocesan meeting of the Catholic Women’s League in Watrous.

May 1-6 – Fr. Paul led a retreat at St.

Martha’s Retreat Centre, Lethbridge, Alberta.

May 7-11 – Abbot Elias Lorenzo, OSB, retreat master for St. Peter’s Abbey, addressed the theme: “Scripture in the Rule of St. Benedict”. Lorenzo gave a presentation to the public, on behalf of St. Peter’s College, May 11, on the theme: “Good Zeal in Benedictine Education”. Lorenzo is a member of St. Mary’s Abbey, New Jersey and is the president of the American Cassinese Congregation (ACC). St. Peter’s Abbey is a member of ACC.

May 13-19 – Abbot Peter led a retreat for the Sisters of St. Benedict, Winnipeg.

May 17 – Fr. Paul led a retreat at Queen’s House, Saskatoon for spiritual care workers of the Diocese of Saskatoon.

May 17 – The Prairie Messenger announced, in the Vol. 95, No. 1, edition of the Catholic weekly that it would be closing in one year. The main reason for the closing is finances and falling subscriptions.

May 29 – Oblate Terri Zacharias visited the abbey after travelling to Muenster on a Saskatchewan Transportation Company (STC) bus. Zacharias was the last Oblate to use the STC to visit the abbey. The provincial bus line was discontinued after May 31.



Abbot Elias Lorenzo, OSB

Continued on page 10

People and events around the abbey

Continued from page 9

June 1-4 – Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, Br. Basil Schaan, OSB and Rob Harasymchuk, St. Peter’s College president, attended the annual meeting of the Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities at St. John’s Abbey in Minnesota. They viewed the abbey’s new solar energy farm of 25 acres.

June 3 – Fr. Demetrius, guest-master, was presented a quilt by the Saskatchewan Stitches Conference (SSC) in gratitude for his support during their 15 years of workshops at the abbey. The SSC held a workshop at the abbey, May 24 to June 5.

June 9 – More than one inch of rain fell in a windstorm, the first rainfall this spring. The moisture was needed for gardens and crops.

June 9-11 – Fr. Demetrius led a retreat at Sacred Heart Church in Ituna.

June 14-15 – Fr. Paul attended the 2017 Canadian Catholic Campus Ministry Conference in Saskatoon. The event was held at St. Thomas More College.



APPRECIATION – Fr. Demetrius Wasylyniuk, OSB, guest-master, is presented a quilt by the Saskatchewan Stitches Conference (SSC) in gratitude for his support during their 15 years of workshops at the abbey. Making the presentation is Wendy Toye, conference organizer and owner of the Haus of Stitches in Humboldt.

June 15 – Abbot Peter and Fr. Cosmas Epifano, OSB pastor of St. Bruno Parish in Bruno, attended the 90th anniversary celebration of the Bruno CWL.

June 19-22 – The Ukrainian Catholic Clergy of the Eparchy of Saskatoon held their annual retreat at St. Peter’s Abbey. Abbot Peter was the retreat master.

June 20 – Fr. Joe Ackerman, OSB, moved into Prairie View residence in Bruno, after one year of retirement as pastor of the parishes in Bruno and Peterson. He served as pastor for 19 years.

June 29 – Edward Gibney and Michael Yaremko were ordained to priesthood at the Cathedral of the Holy Family by Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina. Representing the abbey were: Abbot Peter, Frs. Demetrius, Richard and Cosmas, and Br. Basil.

July 8 – Oblate Jackie Saretsky addressed 30 Oblates at the Oblate Day gathering on the topic of “Spiritual Care and the Rule of St. Benedict”. Oblate Day began with Mass and then dinner with the Benedictines.

July 10 – A thunderstorm brought 1.75 inches of rainfall in the evening, a welcome blessing after weeks of hot, dry weather. A bolt of lightning hit a power



WELCOMES BISHOPS – Fr. Demetrius Wasylyniuk, OSB celebrated Divine Liturgy with Bishops David Motiuk of the Eparchy of Edmonton, left, and Brian Bayda, CSsR of the Eparchy of Saskatoon, at St. Peter’s Abbey. The bishops attended “Unity”, a Ukrainian Catholic conference for young adults, Aug. 17 to 20, at the abbey. The conference is sponsored by the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada.



BLESSES FIELDS – Abbot Peter blesses the fields at Mount Carmel on July 16 during Mount Carmel Sunday.

transformer in the abbey’s west parking lot around 10 p.m., causing a power outage at the abbey until 6:30 a.m.

July 11 – Br. Benedict van Ginkel, OSB made his Solemn Profession of monastic vows at Mass presided by Abbot Peter, and Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB celebrated his 60th anniversary of monastic vows. A festive dinner was held afterwards, attended by friends and family of Br. Benedict and Fr. Lawrence.

July 16 – Abbot Peter was the celebrant at the 95th Annual Mount Carmel Pilgrimage, attended by approximately 450. Fr. Lawrence presented the homily and was recognized on his 60th anniversary to monastic life. Concelebrating were: Frs. Daniel Muyres, OSB, Paul, Demetrius, and Michael Yaremko, new priest of St. Augustine Parish, Humboldt who was ordained two weeks previously. Brs. Anthony Nguyen, OSB and Benedict van Ginkel, OSB assisted as sacristans.

July 18-21 – Fr. Paul and Br. Benedict attended a formation conference at St. Vincent Archabbey, Pennsylvania.

July 24-25 – More than 50 priests from across the province enjoyed the sports and recreation facilities of the abbey at the Annual Clergy Sports Day, sponsored by the Saskatchewan Knights of Columbus.

July 29 – Abbot Peter and Br. Anthony took part in the Rock the Mount celebration at Mount Carmel.

July 31 – Aug. 3 – Abbot Peter, former state chaplain, attended the 135th Supreme Convention of the Knights of Columbus in St. Louis, Missouri.

Aug. 13 – Abbot Peter was the guest speaker at St. Michael’s Catholic Women’s League 90th Anniversary in Cudworth.

Aug. 15 – Jerry and Bernice Junk celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary with family and friends at an anniversary Mass at the abbey with Abbot Peter as celebrant. Fr. Demetrius gave an anniversary blessing. Everyone gathered for lunch, afterwards, in the guest dining room.

Aug. 17-20 – The Eparchy of Saskatoon sponsored the annual “Unity” gathering of young adults at St. Peter’s Abbey. The Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada holds Unity every three years as a celebration for young adults (18

Sept. 2 – Fr. Paul attended the funeral of his uncle, Floyd Paproski, 80, of Wynyard.

Sept. 5 – The students of St. Peter’s College were welcomed back to another year of studies at Orientation Day. Teachers and staff gave presentations, tours of the college and served lunch, sponsored by campus ministry. The college registered 135 full and part-time students.



DISPLAYS HONEY – Fr. Demetrius Wasylyniuk, OSB, beekeeper at St. Peter’s Abbey, holds a container of honey from the 2017 harvest. The abbey bees produced 350 lbs. of honey. The final extraction was on September 12.

to 35 years). They gather to better understand, embrace and celebrate the faith of Byzantine Catholics. Among the 45 attending from Canada and the United States were: Bishops Bryan Bayda, CSSR of the Eparchy of Saskatoon and David Motiuk of the Eparchy of Edmonton.

Aug. 24-27 – Abbot Peter accompanied Fr. Cosmas to Queen of Peace Monastery in Squamish, B.C. Fr. Cosmas will be chaplain to the Dominican contemplative community in a beautiful mountain setting north of Vancouver.

Fr. Lawrence manages garden project for poor

Whenever Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB visits the abbey during the summer months from his northern parishes, he changes into work clothes and disappears into his garden. The garden is a special project for the needy in northern Saskatchewan.

“As a CBC radio listener, I was acutely aware how Canada’s northerners have been paying outrageous prices for vegetables. So when I was appointed pastor of Southend and La Ronge, especially since it was seeding time, I felt strongly that I should add some garden at the abbey to help support those I would be called on to nourish in more spiritual ways as well,” he said.

A friend, Jim Ternier, provided Fr. Lawrence with advice and help in planting his first garden in 2016. Ternier is a professional gardener and grows vegetables for the abbey in exchange for using abbey land for his own garden.

Bishop Murray Chatlain of Keewatin-Le Pas Diocese, gave Fr. Lawrence support for his gardening project. Bishop Chatlain informed him that the federal government is promoting gardening initiatives in the north. The first garden plot, in 2016, was planted with help of Ternier and some Benedictines.

“That success, along with getting to know people in health care at Southend who were able to distribute this food to those who truly needed it, encouraged me to continue the project in 2017. But getting to know Isabelle Doran, a First Nations person and friend of St. Peter’s College, who was recognized by her Prince Albert community as a leader in caring for people in need, encouraged me to add considerably to the size of the project,” he commented.

The 2017 garden became covered in weeds after commitments in the north



AVID GARDENER – Fr. Lawrence, an avid gardener, is raising vegetables for the poor near his parishes in northern Saskatchewan.

prevented Fr. Lawrence from returning to the abbey. He had been promised some help in weeding from a friend but that failed due to illness. The garden looked as if it had become a failure and should be plowed under.

“Weeds that were belly-button high were soon, with our excellent growing conditions, up to my eyeballs,” he remarked. Fr. Lawrence returned to the

abbey in July and spent many hours reclaiming his vegetables.

“Sadly, we had to plow down a good portion of the carrots. Our present garden is mainly carrots, beets, parsnips, broad beans and squash. The garden measures 48 ft. by 235ft. For a guy who turned 80 on Aug. 29, I have rarely worked so hard. . . . But the weeds were lost.”

Donations and Bequests

We seek to provide prophetic witness through a monastic lifestyle of prayer and work that gives priority to the praise of God. We embrace service to God's People through hospitality to guests, involvement in parish ministry, education, the press and sustainable agriculture.

Please remember the monks of St. Peter's Abbey when considering making donations to charities or bequests.

Donations will help, in particular, towards helping us finance needed improvements to our infrastructure, promoting vocations and providing for the needs of our elderly.

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