



# A Letter from the Abbey

Cistercian Abbey • Our Lady of Dallas

## Briefly

### Portrait of Br. Ignatius

The abbey's resident artist, Br. Ignatius Peacher, creates pieces that combine faith and contemporary art. See page 6.

### Summer travels

**Fr. Abbot, Fr. Roch, Fr. Julius, and Fr. Bede** all returned to Hungary to visit friends and relatives, see the sights, and participate in liturgies in the Abbey of Zirc. **Fr. Robert** crisscrossed Ireland, visiting friends and distant family members. **Fr. Gregory** attended performances at the English National Opera and the famous Globe Theatre among other things during two weeks in England. **Fr. Peter, Fr. Julius,** and a group of four brothers hiked the Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee. **Fr. Mark and Fr. Paul** took seven of the brothers, including our novice **Br. Justin,** west to Taos, New Mexico. They enjoyed a week of hiking, biking, fishing and white-water rafting in the Rocky Mountains, while taking in the natural beauty of northern New Mexico.

## ABBEY CHURCH

### Fall schedule

#### First Friday Masses

7:30 pm during the school year

#### Memorare Mass, November 14

4:30 pm

#### Christmas Eve, December 24

11:30 pm Office of Readings  
Midnight Mass

#### Christmas Day, December 25

9 am, concelebrated High Mass.

#### On New Year's Eve, December 31

Eucharistic Adoration  
9 pm -12 midnight (benediction)

## A higher education

*Five of the brothers are continuing their studies in Rome*

**By Br. Ambrose Strong**

The current school year sees the brothers scatter as they advance in their education.

During the month of September, five brothers stormed the city of Rome to study theology (in Italian) at various universities.

Br. Thomas is studying the Holy Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute.

Under the direction of the Redemptorists, Br. Ambrose is working toward a de-

gree in moral theology at the Alphonsianum.

Brs. Stephen and Nathanael are attending the University of Sant Anselmo, run by the Benedictines.

Br. Philip is studying at the Angelicum, a university operated by the Dominicans.

All five will reside in our international residential college at the Generalate of the Cistercian Order on the Aventine Hill.

*continued on page 4*

**Funding the young monks' educations 3**

**Brief bios on the 12 young monks 3-4**



Photo by Jim Kersch

COMPELLING CEREMONY Bishop Kevin Farrell of Dallas and the newly ordained Fr. Joseph at the Ordination on Saturday, August 15.

Fr. Joseph leads a group of eleven more young monks who are aiming to follow in his footsteps.

**By Br. Ambrose Strong**

**O**n August 15, Father Joseph Van House was ordained to the priesthood in the Abbey Church by Bishop Farrell.

In the presence of a large crowd representing the Cistercian community, Fr. Joseph became the first monk in the abbey in twelve years to be ordained a priest. Fr. Joseph leads the batch of new brothers to be ordained and to serve in our school.

The next day, August 16, Fr. Joseph celebrated his first mass.

"I understand that you had the opportunity yesterday to meet many of the young men whom you will serve as

*continued on page 5*

# Pope proclaims a “Year of the Priest”

*Brs. Joseph and Thomas witness encouraging service at St. Peter’s in June*

**Br. Thomas Esposito**

Pope Benedict XVI chose June 19th, the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as the starting date for a “Year of the Priest.”

To celebrate the occasion, he led Vespers

in St. Peter’s, which Fr. Joseph and I were privileged to attend.

The pope began his reflections with a stunning quote from St. John Vianney: “The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus.”

The love of the heart of Jesus, Benedict insisted, guides the heart of the priest in his ministry.

“It invites us to go out of ourselves,” the pope added, “to forsake our human certainties, in order that we may entrust ourselves to Him and, by following His example, to make of ourselves a gift of unreserved love.”

Pope Benedict gave us a wonderful chance to reflect on the priesthood within our own Cistercian vocation.

There is no “Cistercian priesthood,” it is not a separate institution: the sacrament of Holy Orders makes all who receive it enter into the single priesthood and mission of Jesus Christ. Like all priests, every Cistercian priest is addressed as Father.

This title, which precedes our monastic name, is a constant reminder of our calling to a spiritual fatherhood that permeates the other two aspects of our Cistercian life, that of monk and teacher.

We are entrusted with the tasks of providing for, instructing, and praying for our spiritual children, as all fathers do for their children.

Cistercian life, which may be compared to three strands joined in a single rope, is fastened together by the Sacred Heart of Jesus, because each strand places us daily at the foot of the Cross.

As priests, we are entrusted with the body of Christ, as well as the blood and water flowing from His pierced side, in order that we may bring them to others through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

As teachers, we enlighten our students’ minds in many subjects and enkindle their hearts in order to bring them to Christ, the source of all truth. And as monks, we watch and pray for our students and sanctify the sacrifices of our lives.

At the foot of the Cross we meet Jesus’ mother and the beloved disciple. Christ says to His mother: “Woman, behold your son.”

The priest inserts himself into the role of her son and remains mindful of her maternal protection when we sing together every morning the ancient prayer called *Sub Tuum*: “Under your protection we find refuge, O holy Mother of God. Deliver us from all dangers, ever Virgin, holy and blessed.”

We live out our threefold Cistercian vocation under the sign of the Cross, with Mary at our side.

## A “Year of the Priest” may not be sufficient for our Abbey

**W**hen Pope Benedict announced his initiative of a “Year of the Priest,” one of my reactions was: a year won’t do. We need a whole decade.

Not only because of the “shortage of priests,” or “vocation crisis,” or the pastoral worries which inundate every diocesan bishop. These are symptoms.

The problem is the disease. In a secularized world the misdiagnosis of the disease is more convenient than a deeper look into its nature, causes, and cures.



**By Abbot Denis Farkasfalvy**

Quick fixes are, in some sense, rather easy: consolidate and rationalize services, use more the lay ministries that are available, diversify the training, expand the role of women. There are plenty of people ready to bring Christ to the world.

But when the pope put St. John Vianney into the focus of his “Year of the Priest,” he named a task that cannot be carried out by clever moves and efficient organization.

The Lord is seeking saintly priests who are willing to

live a full-time priestly life — prayer, zeal, learning, embracing Christ-like celibacy and poverty.

He seeks candidates ready to give away their full personal lives so that the risen Christ may be extended to all people of all times and spaces not in terms of technology, media, or organizations, but by real lives lived for Christ.

That is the special role of a monastic life — to reinforce and ensure that the priesthood as a whole will not be reduced to a collection of “religion providers,” assigning a “minister practitioner” to each person’s “soul-care needs,” just a cell phone call away.

Our Abbey stands at an important threshold where studies are being completed, brothers are being ordained and beginning to take on full-time responsibilities with the school in our field of service.

We are beholding the next generation of Cistercian.

In these days, the Cistercian Abbey mostly needs prayer and support as the future unfolds according to God’s will. We, the elderly, need a strong sense of purpose and unity as we sing our “swan songs.”

And only with purpose and unity can the young inherit the authentic traditions and stay on course while transcending the limited perspectives of their original intentions.

The priest is often called an *Alter Christus*, which is frequently translated incorrectly as “another Christ.” This cannot be so, for there is only one Christ; but, Christ needs alternative and yet authentic representations of his personal presence.

The “Year of the Priest” will be, at least for the Cistercian Abbey, a decade in which His presence is renewed through our chosen — the called, formed, and trained — brothers.

Through their ordinations from 2009 and beyond, they are to be placed on the rock of Christ’s ministry to his Church.

*The Cistercian Abbey mostly needs prayer and support as the future unfolds according to God’s will.*

## Young Monks Education Fund

# Paying for eleven tuitions

By Fr. Peter Verhalen

Cistercian has no greater joy than seeing young men share in the abbey's vocation. Their presence provides us with assurance that our Monastery's life and work will continue.

Their education also means additional responsibilities for Cistercian of which both School and Abbey are equally aware.

Just for this coming year, this responsibility includes eleven college tuitions with the added costs of studying abroad in Rome (about \$25,000 per student).

If you can help out with the education of the brothers, consider making a donation to the Young Monks Education Fund. Frequent-flier miles are welcomed, too!

To donate to the Young Monks Education Fund, please contact Erin Hart, director of development, by phone at 469-499-5406, or by email at [ehart@cistercian.org](mailto:ehart@cistercian.org).

Photo by Jim Reisch



## THE YOUNG MONKS OF

The first priestly ordination in over a decade proclaims the emergence of a new generation of Cistercian priests at the Abbey of Our Lady of Dallas.

For his historic first mass of thanksgiving, Fr. Joseph asked Fr. Paul to preach to the brothers who are coming behind him in formation, saying "Fr. Paul, please say something for the brothers. Speak of that which the brothers have to look forward to as priests, specifically as Cistercian priests who live in community as monks and as teachers."

The twelve young Cistercian monks (a number with clear biblical symbolism) are listed in order of seniority, based on the year of entry into the novitiate, as is our custom.



**FR. JOSEPH VAN HOUSE** came from Atlanta to begin college at the University of Dallas in 1999. He entered the monastery after graduating there in philosophy in 2003. After further studies in Dallas and Rome, he took his solemn vows in August 2008 and was ordained a priest this month. He is serving as the form master of Form I (Class of 2017) and teaching Latin and Religion at the prep school.



**BR. AUGUSTINE HOELKE** is a lifelong resident of the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. He attended Cistercian Prep for eight years, graduating in 2000. He received a B.A. in Spanish from the University of Dallas in 2004, after which he entered the monastery. In May of 2009, he completed his studies in philosophy and theology at UD, earning the M.Th. degree. In August of the same year, he took his solemn vows and was ordained a deacon. During the next school year, Br. Augustine will be working on an M.A. in Spanish at University of North Texas in Denton, teaching a history elective at the Prep School, and making final preparations for his ordination to the priesthood, which will take place in August 2010.



**BR. PHILIP NERI LASTIMOSA** also graduated from the Cistercian Prep School in 2000, after which he pursued an engineering degree at Lehigh University. He entered the novitiate in 2004 after graduating from college. For the past few years Br. Philip has been studying philosophy, theology and physics at the University of Dallas. He took solemn vows in August of 2009, the same month he was ordained to the diaconate. This fall he will

study theology in Rome at the Angelicum in preparation for his priestly ordination in the fall of next year.



**BR. IGNATIUS PEACHER** graduated from St. John's University (Minnesota) in 1998, where he majored in art. Later, he studied architecture at The University of Texas at Arlington, where he obtained his Master's degree in 2004. He worked for a year at an architecture firm near Austin before entering the monastery in August 2005. This August, Br. Ignatius renewed his temporary vows. Presently, he is taking theology and philosophy courses at the University of Dallas and teaching Form II Religion at the Prep School.



**BR. THOMAS ESPOSITO** was raised in Omaha, Nebraska. He graduated from the University of Dallas in 2005 with a bachelor's degree in philosophy. He entered the novitiate in August of 2005 (together with Brother Ignatius and Brother Ambrose), took temporary vows in 2006, and renewed those temporary vows in 2009. He is currently studying Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.



**BR. AMBROSE STRONG** graduated from the University of Dallas in 2005 with a degree in Philosophy. That fall he entered the monastery as a novice and took his first set of vows in August of 2006, renewing them in August. He taught Religion at the Prep School for two years. Armed with his master's



Please consider including Cistercian in your estate plans and become a member of the

**MEMORARE**  
SOCIETY

Contact Erin Hart at 469-499-5406 or [ehart@cistercian.org](mailto:ehart@cistercian.org)



## Educating the young monks

*continued from page 4*

This arrangement will give our brothers a unique opportunity to deepen their understanding of our Cistercian vocation and of the special calling of our monastery as they complete their specialized studies

THE ABBOT & THE YOUNG MEN gathered before five in the group left for their advanced studies in Rome. (Bottom row, l-r): Br. Justin McNamara, Br. Stephen Gregg '01, Br. Joseph Van House, Abbot Denis Farkasfalvy, Br. Ignatius Peacher, and Br. Philip Lastimosa '00. (Top row, l-r): Br. Lawrence Brophy '01, Br. Nathanael Frei, Br. Augustine Hoelke '00, Br. Anthony Bigney, Br. John Bayer, Br. Ambrose Strong, and Br. Thomas.

Meanwhile back in North Texas, Brother Augustine will continue with his Spanish studies for an M.A. at the University of North Texas in Denton, along with Br. Lawrence who is studying for a Ph.D. in Mathematics.

Brs. Ignatius, Lawrence, Anthony, John, and Justin will continue their studies in theology at the University of Dallas.

## OUR LADY OF DALLAS

degree in Theology from UD, he has begun the first of a two-year program at St. Alphonsus Academy in Rome to study Moral Theology.



After graduating from Cistercian Prep in 2001, **BR. STEPHEN GREGG** attended the University of the South, in Sewanee, Tennessee, where he took a degree in Latin and in Mediaeval Studies in 2005. He entered the novitiate in 2006, after teaching for a year at the Prep School. Having studied philosophy and theology for three years at the University of Dallas, he is now in Rome to complete his theological studies at the University of Sant Anselmo.



**BR. LAWRENCE BROPHY** graduated from the Cistercian Prep in 2001 (Ed Brophy). After earning a B.S. and an M.S. in Financial Mathematics from Texas A&M University, he joined the monastery in 2006. He made his first pledge of temporary vows in August of 2007. He is currently taking Theology classes at UD, Mathematics classes at UNT, and teaching Form III Religion at the Cistercian Prep School.



**BR. NATHANAEL FREI** is originally from St. Louis, Missouri, and studied Theology and French at the University of Dallas. He entered the Cistercian Order after graduating in 2006. After taking his first set of temporary vows in August of 2007, he has split his time between graduate studies at UD and teaching Form II Religion at the Prep School. This Fall, Br. Nathanael began his studies at the University of Sant Anselmo in Rome, where he is working towards a higher degree in Sacred Theology.



**BR. ANTHONY BIGNEY** grew up in the Midwest and came to Texas in 2004 after graduating from Marquette University where he studied Political Science. He taught for three years at a Dallas area parochial school as he further discerned his vocation. He entered the novitiate in 2007 and took his first set of temporary vows the following year. Br. Anthony taught World History to Form II last school year and will be teaching Form IV religion this year. He will continue his studies in philosophy and theology at the University of Dallas for the next couple years.



**BR. JOHN BAYER**, born in Arlington, TX and raised in New York, graduated from the University of Dallas in 2006 with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy. After spending one year working for the Dallas office of a global law firm, he entered the novitiate at Cistercian. Br. John took temporary vows in August of 2008. Currently he is taking graduate theology courses at UD and teaching Latin at the Prep School.



**BR. JUSTIN MCNAMARA** completed his undergraduate studies in philosophy while attending St. Joseph's College Seminary at Loyola University in Chicago. Upon completion of his studies he pursued God's call to the priesthood at Mundelein Seminary/University of Saint Mary of the Lake in Chicago. After studying theology for two years he further discerned a call to the monastic life after meeting a former novice from Our Lady of Dallas. He took the novitiate habit on August 19th of this year. The following year will be comprised of spiritual formation and community building for this newest addition to the monastery.

## Vocations Retreat

If you feel you might be called to the priestly or monastic way of life, please consider contacting Fr. Paul McCormick, about our annual "Vocation Retreat" held at the abbey at the calendar year winds down.

The retreat begins on Dec. 29th and concludes with Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction at midnight as the New Year begins.

For more information contact Fr. Paul at: [fr-paul@cistercian.org](mailto:fr-paul@cistercian.org)



Chicagoan becomes monastery's twelfth young monk

## Six young monks profess vows in August

On August 20, the feast of St. Bernard, five Brothers made their religious vows in a Mass presided over by Fr. Abbot.

Br. Augustine and Br. Philip made their Solemn Vows for perpetuity: "until death."

"I was overcome by the sense of how little the act of making vows has to do with the individual alone," Br. Augustine remarked about the occasion.

"It is totally about one's relationship with God and the community to which he joins himself."

During the same ceremony Br. Ignatius, Br. Thomas, and Br. Ambrose renewed their profession of vows for another three years, during which time Solemn Vows can be made.

The brothers promise stability, obedience, and the "monastic way



RENEWING THEIR VOWS Br. Ignatius, Br. Thomas, and Br. Ambrose lay prostrate to demonstrate their "stability, obedience and the monastic way of life."

of life" (which includes poverty and chastity) as monks of the Abbey, in response to God's invitation.

The newest member of the abbey, Ryan McNamara, now novice Br. Justin, hails from Chicago, where he was studying as a diocesan seminarian.

On August 19th, during a private ceremony in the Abbey Church on the eve of the feast of St. Bernard, he received the religious habit and his new name.

He was named after a 2nd century Roman martyr who was famous for his public defense of faith against the Roman persecutors. He also is known for his writings, which include important passages on Mary and the Eucharist.

The number of young men in the monastery under the age of 35 now stands at twelve.

## Ordinations signal the beginning of a new era

*continued from page 1*

Form Master for the next eight years and beyond," commented Fr. Paul.

"It is good that they were here," he added. "It will be a lifetime memory that they will share with you."

"As St. Paul so passionately wrote to his communities about spiritual paternity, so also you will find that as a pastor of souls your own happiness ... and your own salvation ... is now intricately interwoven with theirs."

"My ordination," Fr. Joseph reflected, "linked with Philip and Augustine's final vows, means that the increased number of young men in the Abbey in recent years isn't a fad or an experiment.

"There will be members of this generation to carry forward the special combination of consecration and apostolic service that is our Abbey's charism."

On August 30, Brothers Augustine Hoelke (Cistercian Class '00) and Philip

Lastimos (Cistercian Class '00) were ordained as deacons in the Abbey Church by Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann.

will be closer than ever before to the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist — proclaiming the Gospel, preaching, and assisting the priest at the altar.

"I can think of no better preparation for the priesthood."

Br. Philip is already pondering the challenges of serving as a deacon.

"On the one hand," he said, "I feel as though God has chosen the clerical state for me since before I was born.

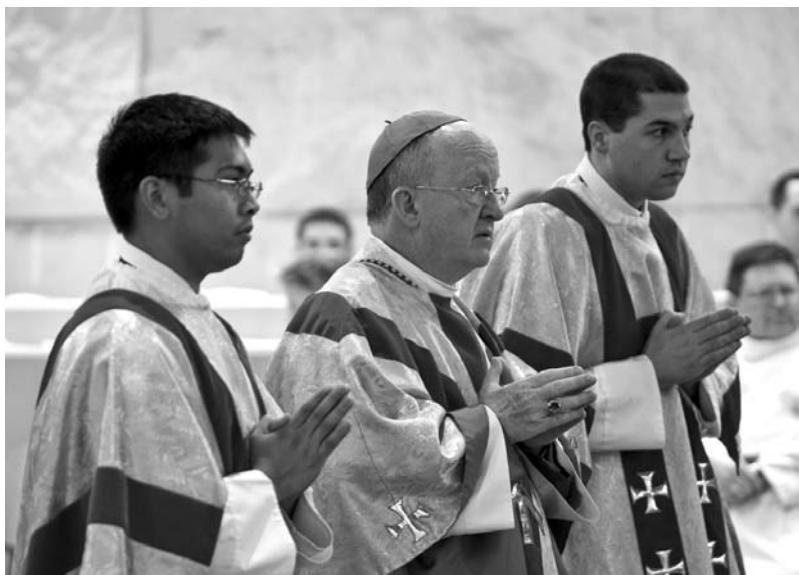
"On the other hand, I feel as though I do not know how to speak because I am so young.

"So in that respect, I'm deathly afraid of having to preach my first sermon.

"But I trust that," added Br. Philip, "like

the prophet Jeremiah, God will place His words in my mouth when the time for preaching arrives."

Both brothers will be ordained to the priesthood in the fall of 2010 in the Abbey church.



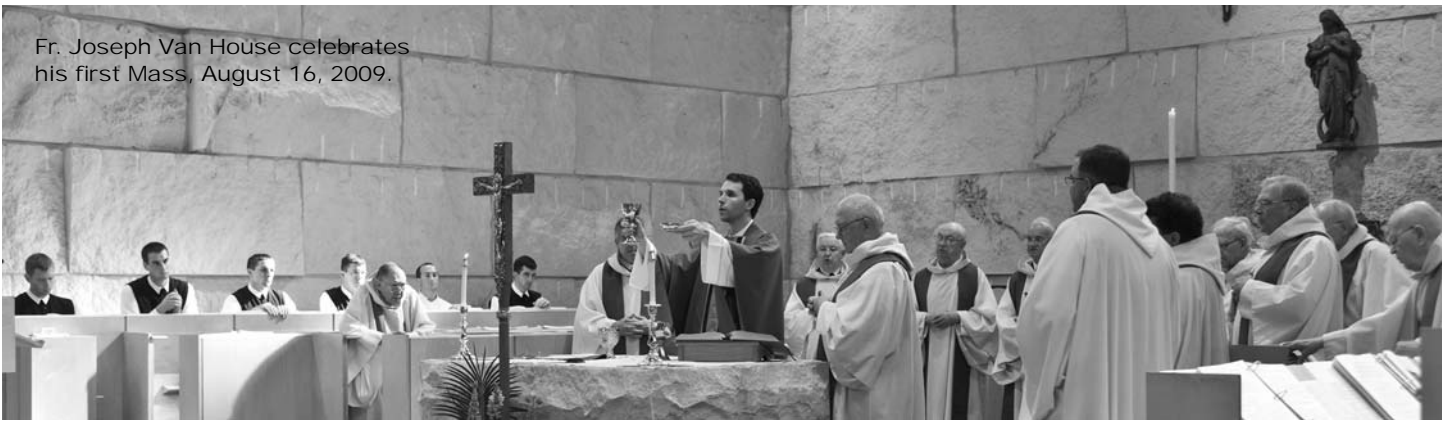
NEW DEACONS Br. Philip Lastimos (left) and Br. Augustine Hoelke (right) with Bishop Kevin Vann of Fort Worth at their ordination.

Before becoming a priest, one is ordained to the transitional diaconate for 6-12 months.

Deacons proclaim the Gospel at Mass, give homilies, and if the need arises, perform baptisms and hold weddings.

"As a deacon," said Br. Augustine, "I

Fr. Joseph Van House celebrates his first Mass, August 16, 2009.



## Abbey Church Services

Office of Readings and Morning Prayer	6 am
Daily Mass Monday through Saturday	6:30 am
Mass on Sunday	9 am
Evening Prayer	6 pm
First Friday Mass	7:30 pm

The Collegium Cantorum of the University of Dallas will join us for Mass on the First Friday of every month during the school year.

**Cistercian Abbey Our Lady of Dallas**  
 3550 Cistercian Road  
 Irving, Texas 75039

# Portrait of Br. Ignatius as a young man

By Br. Nathanael Frei

On many Saturday mornings, class trips of architecture students from local universities can be seen sitting on the Abbey church's front lawn, sketching its beautiful blending of old world materials and traditions with modern art and architecture.

For Br. Ignatius, the monastery's resident artist, the Abbey church serves as an example of the dialogue between contemporary art and religion that he seeks to evoke in his own artwork. Having received a B.A. in art from St. John's University, a Masters in architecture from University of Texas in Arlington, and studying the works in the world famous Parisian art museums where he lived for two years, Br. Ignatius' sensitivity to contemporary art makes

the Abbey church all the more appealing to him as a place of prayer.

Since becoming a monk four years ago, his artwork has increasingly sought to unite the faith with the ongoing conversation of contemporary art. While in college, Br. Ignatius says

his motivation and focus centered on getting his pieces into galleries and achieving some notoriety, but since then his perspective has matured into one that seeks to make a gift of his talents for others.

Rather than trying to please himself, he now tries to bring pleasure to others, most notably in the paintings he creates as wedding presents for his friends and family. His art has also allowed him to grow spiritually.

"The majority of the themes of these

*"When I use text, I am trying to create a piece that can be appreciated like Chinese calligraphy, just on its line, form, color, and composition."*

— Br. Ignatius

paintings have been about God, the saints, or from scripture," said Br. Ignatius. "The art, therefore, has become a way for me to ponder the mysteries of God and hopefully it will lead others to meditate on these mysteries and take some joy from it."

Just as our Saturday morning visitors are inspired by the beauty of the Abbey church, so Br. Ignatius strives to be an artist who serves the Church by exemplifying how modern art can glorify God.

