

The

For family, friends, and alumni of Cistercian Preparatory School ■ Winter 2009

CNTINIUM



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Kevin Hedrick '09 with the Class of 2009 at his back.

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The CONTINUUM

David Stewart '74
Editor & Art Director

Tom B. Pruitt
Copy Editor

Carolina Pruitt
Assistant Copy Editor

Jim Reisch
Photography Editor

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3660 Cistercian Road
Irving, TX 75039
469-499-5400

www.cistercian.org

Taking the long perspective

Early Dallas Cistercians would be proud of our 40th class of seniors

This edition of *The Continuum* features another fascinating glimpse into the early history of the Dallas Cistercians. It reminds us once again to take the long perspective, one that recognizes that in May, the 40th group of seniors will receive their Cistercian diplomas.



Letter from the headmaster

Fr. Peter Verhalen '73

of Zirc — to serve as priest, monk, and teacher.

Everyone associated with Cistercian today — students, teachers, parents — realizes that this triple vocation forms the core of our community.

And, while the abbey has often been characterized by many strong, talented personalities, Class 2009 has similarly learned to support one another, working with — rather than against — one another.

In his article, Dr. Pruitt captures beautifully the sense of servant leadership so pervasive among the seniors — and all our students, we hope.

In a sense, David Stewart's piece reminds us where we have come from and Dr. Pruitt's describes where we are. It's God's hand that has connected the two.

I see the hand of God's Providence at work in another, much more fundamental way: putting people into our lives when we need them.

I am thinking of Abbot Anselm, Abbot Denis, Fr. Roch, and Fr. Julius — the people David writes about — but I am also thinking of the lay men and women who joined with the Cistercians in founding the school.

I hope this issue of *The Continuum* prompts you to look for God's Providence in your life.

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Generation gap 8

It took some time for the young Cistercian refugees of 1956 to see the wisdom of moving to the Our Lady of Dallas monastery (left in 1961).

By David Stewart

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Standing together 15

Leaders in the Class of 2009 find an army of supporters at their back.

By Tom Pruitt

Cover photography:
Jim Reisch

Cistercian Preparatory School was founded with the aim of preparing talented boys for the colleges of their choice by challenging their minds with excellent academic programs, molding their character through the values of Catholic education, and offering them guidance with both understanding and discipline. Cistercian Preparatory School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational practices, admissions, scholarship programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.



NEW LOOK An artist's rendering of how the Middle School will appear when completed in September.

Major renovation Middle School to be made over by September

While no one will have trouble recognizing the Middle School after its renovation this summer, architect Gary Cunningham promises it will have a brand-new feel.

Additional light will be supplied from the Form IV side of the building (towards the abbey) where a glass vestibule/entryway will be constructed. A form master's office will be built off this vestibule towards the lower parking lot.

Near the upstairs landing, the front balcony (used for little else than the egg drop) will be enclosed so that it can become a sitting area. On the library side of the upstairs lobby, the dropped ceiling will be removed to expose the sloped, natural wood ceiling.

When entering the upstairs-level of the Middle School from the Upper School, a new entrance will be created for the offices of the headmaster, dean of students, and two form masters.

A seminar classroom (similar to the one in the Upper School) also will be added across from the Form I classrooms.

Downstairs, three offices will be added that will open onto the lunchroom from the old spirit store (and mechanical) space at the south end of the lunchroom.

Another office will be created at the base of the Middle School steps, in place of the current mechanical area.

The front of the Middle School will be landscaped with low-water and low maintenance plants similar to those in front of the Upper School.

"We also hope to re-landscape the area between the Middle School and the Library and between the Library and the Science building," said Fr. Peter, "to provide a nice play space."

The Middle School renovation comes 45 years after the structure was completed in December 1964. (It was first occupied in January of 1965 when Fr. Peter was in Pre-Form.)

New teachers Talented group appreciates school's talent, community

The Cistercian community is privileged to welcome a very talented group of new teachers.

The language department received a boost with the arrival of Monica Daucourt (French, Forms V-VIII) and Jonda Dunck (Spanish, Forms V-VIII).

Daucourt, also the new head of the language department, has taught for 11 years.

"The unity and the solidarity in this school is tremendous," she said. "The boys are committed and driven. Most of all, they watch out for each other, their school, and their teachers."

"I have to say that the characteristic that I find most striking

about Cistercian, its students and their parents," said Dunck, who holds a bachelors and a master's degree in Spanish, "is the genuine sense of community. I have rarely ever seen it enacted as sincerely and as consistently as it is here at Cistercian."

Two additions have made a big impact on the athletic fields.

"I feel a strong sense of community," said Derrick Gatson, who teaches Health in Form III as well coaching football, basketball, and track.

Gatson comes to Cistercian from Trinity Valley.

Br. Lawrence Brophy '01 found that his reputation as an assistant varsity football coach made a lasting impression.

"While I was teaching Algebra II in the Abbot's absence," said Br. Lawrence, who holds a master's degree in math from Texas A&M, "I was greeted by

AN INFLUX OF NEW TEACHING TALENT



Lay

(l-r) Derrick Gatson (Health, PE, basketball, football, track), Monica Daucourt (French, language department head) Michael O'Brien '00 (English, webmaster), and Jonda Dunck (Spanish).

Religious

Bottom row (l-r): Br. John Bayer (ELab), Br. Philip Lastimosa '00 (Physics elective), Br. Ignatius Peacher (architecture elective). Top row (l-r): Br. Lawrence Brophy '01 (football coach), Br. Augustine Hoekle '00 (Religion), and Br. Anthony Bigney (Social Studies).



several of the sophomores as ‘Coach Br. Lawrence.’”

Several other alumni (two of whom are brothers) joined the faculty this year

Br. Augustine Hoelke '00, who is teaching religion in Form IV, enjoys the “game of cat-and-mouse between the teacher’s experience, knowledge, and preparation, and the students’ virtually unlimited intelligence, perceptiveness, and willingness to demand excellence from their teachers.”

Br. Philip Lastimososa '00 taught a first-semester elective on Einstein and his Theory of Relativity.

“The students are so bright and quick and ask questions that plumb the depths of the subject matter,” said Br. Philip, “I realized that I was pushed to grapple with the subject more than I anticipated.”

Michael O'Brien '00, who serves as Cistercian’s webmaster and teaches English to Form III concurs with this assessment.

“They enjoy learning and actively incorporate their academic studies into their social interactions and their personal lives,” O’Brien said.

Several of the monks bring special teaching aptitudes to their work at the prep school.

Br. Anthony Bigney, who combines his experience teaching at a local parochial school with a love for history, is most impressed with the sense of community.

“There’s a reason,” he emphasized, “why teachers have been working at this school for 40 years.”

Br. Ignatius Peacher’s master’s degree in Architecture and bachelor’s degree in art give him the “street cred” to teach an architecture elective.

“There seems to be an atmosphere [at Cistercian] rooted in Christianity which excludes in-



No rumor about Ursuline

Five Cistercian seniors played most of the major roles in the recent Ursuline production of “Rumors.” Standing (l-r) **Chris Brandt '10**, **Will Schleier '09**, **Paul DiFiore '09**. Sitting (l-r) **Carson Chapman '09** and **Pablo Muldoon '09**. Cistercian actors have slowly made inroads into Ursuline productions over the years, but this was the first time Cistercian students have snagged virtually all of the key roles.

sults and threats typical among boys in middle school and high school,” he marveled. “Exceling in academics is encouraged even by the students.”

Br. John Bayer, who has been known to play capture the flag with Second Formers along with Br. Anthony, feels that “The presence of another young monk is yet another reminder to the school community of the primacy of God’s will.”

“Cistercian is a testament to the fact that God exists,” he said, “and that his will can be discovered and followed.”

Many in the Cistercian community are excited by visions of the junior monks taking the school far into the future.

But as much as they do to encourage these thoughts, the young monks view each other in a far more practical perspective.

“A special part of my teaching experience,” said Br. Augustine, “has been going through my first year alongside eight other Cistercian junior brothers.

“Week after week,” Br. Augustine emphasized, “we’re able to encourage each other, commiserate, and most of all, to share the lessons of our new experiences in the classroom.”

Academic recognition Two from Class of '09 are presidential scholar candidates

Michael Lawson '09 and **James Levitt '09** were nominated as Presidential Scholars in January on the basis of SAT and ACT scores as part of the Arts Recognition and Talent Search.

Approximately 2,600 students are nominated nationally.

To be considered further, candidates must submit a variety of materials, including essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports, and transcripts. Candidates are evaluated on their essays, academic achievement, personal characteristics, leadership/service activities.

Jack Squiers '08, **Michael Montoya '07** and **Jim von der Heydt '92** are previous Presidential Scholars.

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES
(l-r) **Michael Lawson '09** and **James Levitt '09** won nominations as Presidential Scholars.

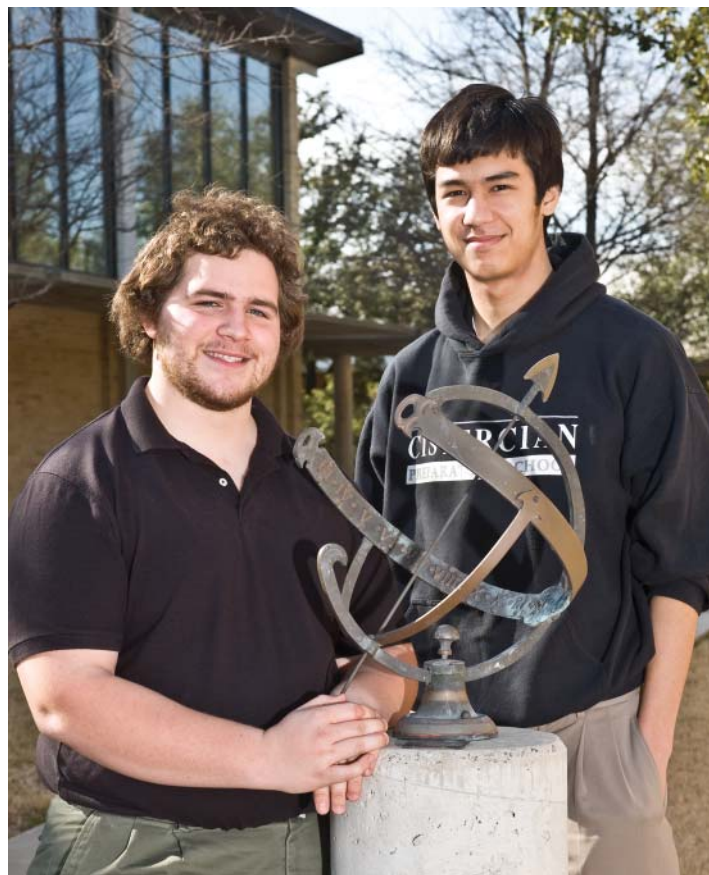


Photo © 2009, L'Observatore Romano

Papal Mass

Br. Joseph Van House had the opportunity to serve at a Mass celebrated by the Holy Father on January 1, 2009 at St. Peter's Basilica.



50th Ann. Campaign Donations surpass expectations by 3x

Since last January when the school had raised \$7.4 million in cash and pledges for the 50th Anniversary Campaign, another \$2 million has been donated, for a total of 9.4 million. The goal had been \$700,000.

"Thanks to Joel Fontenot, **Matt Hawkins '88**, and **Mark Roppolo '88**," said Fr. Peter at the Moroney Award Dinner, "and campaign chairs **Jim Moroney '74**, **Peter Smith '74** and **Jere Thompson '74**, and thanks to the generous support of all those who have contributed."

"Our next goal," Fr. Peter said, "is to raise \$750,000 so that we can pay off the note for the 20 acres of land we purchased three years ago."

"If you have not contrib-

uted to the campaign as yet," he added, "please do so, and as generously as you can, so that this time next year I can again announce that we have tripled our goal."

A "no-brainer" Capasso '88 donates kidney to brother, Capasso '90

On January 15, 2009, **Joe Capasso '88** donated a kidney to his brother **Mark Capasso '90**.

Mark, whose kidney failure arose about a year ago due to a long bout with diabetes, "is feeling much better," said Joe.

"His energy and mood are better since the surgery."

Donating a kidney, said Joe, was a "no-brainer," taking the donor about four weeks to recover. "It was a wonderful opportunity to be there for Mark."

JIM & LYNN MORONEY AWARD

Double the fun at this year's Big Mo

Tim Parker '09 and Rodney Walter honored

Somehow, the Moroney Awards seem to grow ever more memorable as time passes. This year's event on January 30 at the Tower Club, which celebrated the work of two of Cistercian's many dedicated teachers, hit a new high note.

Tim Parker '90 won the Moroney Award as the year's distinguished alumnus for his dedication to the school as a teacher and staff member (see "Triple threat" below).

But in an unprecedented move, the occasion also was used to announce the school's first honorary alumnus, Rodney Walter.

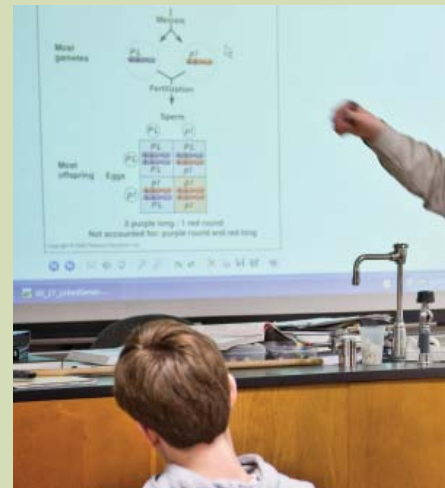
"Speaking as an alum myself," **Fr. Peter Verhalen '73** remarked in his introduction, "I would like to say that I knew and respected Mr. Walter when I was a student ... [now] as a colleague, as the director of facilities, as the director of summer school ... and as the husband and father of a wonderful family. He has always been the same Mr. Walter – a man of corny jokes, passionate interest in history, loyalty to Cistercian, respect for students and faculty alike, and faith."

Walter was then presented with a diploma bestowing upon him the title of Honorary Alumnus Summa Cum Laude.

Walter became beloved at Cistercian for the Texas History

Triple threat

Tim Parker was honored with the Moroney Award for his dedication to work that includes teaching (right in Form V Biology), serving as director of facilities (bottom right with plant manager, Steve Schunk), and construction manager (bottom with, l-r, Justin Henderson and Russ Low of Andres Construction).



trips; but, he earned his stripes with headmasters by his willingness to take on any job.

"I just got in the habit of telling them, 'Yes, I can do that,'" Walter explained in his remarks, in which the 43-year veteran of the school demonstrated the kindness he has shown throughout his career.

"I can think of no better words for the Cistercian community than 'Thank you from the bottom of my heart.'" he concluded.

Dr. Tom Pruitt introduced the Moroney Award winner and informed the audience that Parker was the first graduate of the nineties to win the coveted award. "I think Tim is the first red-headed basketball coach with twins to win the award as well," he joked. "That should stand for a while."

While chiding him for his fashion sense (as teacher, tennis coach, and director of facilities), Pruitt quoted a parent who during an Open House was "struck by his use of visual, auditory, and kinetic techniques, his expert use of questions and his calm but impassioned manner, all signs of an excellent teacher."

In accepting the award, Parker first wanted to acknowledge the appropriateness of being honored with Rodney Walter, his predecessor as director of facilities.

A few days after accepting the new position from Fr. Peter, Walter dropped by a 15-page hand-written job description.

"The grin on his face screamed 'sucker!'" Parker remarked.

"I do [my job at Cistercian] because I love it," he said.

"I do it because the students amaze me everyday with their humor, their intelligence, their goodness, and even their insight.

"I do it," Parker concluded, "because after thirteen years of 'working here,' I don't feel like I have worked a single day."



Photos by Jim Reisch

Honorees

Left: Rodney Walter with his honorary diploma at the Moroney Award Dinner on January 30. Below: Tim Parker absorbs a standing ovation after accepting the Moroney Award.



Honor for faculty members welcomed

Parker suggests that many non-alumni teachers deserve honors

The 2009 Jim and Lynn Moroney Award Dinner will be remembered as a trend-setter.

It was a night when the entire lay faculty was honored by two of theirs winning the night's spotlight and praise.

Parker made the point he was particularly happy that Rodney Walter was awarded an honorary Cistercian diploma.

"Such an award is long overdue," he said. "It allows us the opportunity to award a faculty or staff whether they're an alum or not. Up to now there was not a formal way to do that."

"As glad as I am that Rodney won it," he continued, "I am just as happy that the precedent has been set.

"I won the Moroney Award because I happen to be an alum," he emphasized, "but there is a list of equally deserving faculty members who are just as deserving but didn't graduate from Cistercian."

FAMILY SUPPORT

Above: Tim Parker with wife Amy, children Elizabeth, Will, and the twins, Kate and Emily. Bottom (l-r) Matt Walter '86, Rodney Walter, wife Libby, and Rod Walter '83.



GENERATION



GAP

By
David
E. Stewart



Age, personalities, and loyalties created differences between Fr. Anselm Nagy and the young Cistercians who escaped Hungary in 1956

Editor's note: This is the fourth in an occasional series of stories celebrating the Cistercians' 50 years in Texas.

THE CAR CARRYING FR. ANSELM Nagy turned off of Rome's sunny Piazza del Tempio di Diana and rolled to a halt under the shade of the Cistercian Generalate's front gate house.

By the time the 42-year-old grabbed his hat and coat and made his way into the sunlit courtyard on this April afternoon in 1957, a group had hurried down from their rooms to greet the visitor from America.

These young refugees of the October 1956 Hungarian Revolution — including Br. Roch Kereszty, Br. Matthew Kovacs, Br. Julius Lelóczy, and Br. Denis Farkasfalvy — were just the people Fr. Anselm had come to see.

Officially, Fr. Anselm traveled from Dallas to attend a meeting of the Cistercian Order's *Definitorium* that assembled annually among the blooms of the Roman spring. (Fr. Anselm was making his second appearance at the meeting since being appointed in 1955 as the delegated superior over virtually all of the displaced Hungarian Cistercians.)

But he primarily came to initiate a relationship with the 1956 refugees. Since their escape from Hungary in November, they had become his responsibility and subject to his authority.

While armed with few specifics, Fr. Anselm knew the young monks were studying for their doctorates in Theology. After they completed their studies and were ordained, he expected them to join his new community in Dallas.

This fledgling foundation in Texas had been established in 1955 to provide a home for those Cistercians forced to flee from Soviet-oppressed Hungary. Although this new home lay in America, the expatriated Cistercians were pledged to carry on their vocations as dictated by the Abbey of Zirc (*pronounced Zeertz*), the mother abbey of all Hungarian Cistercians.

The beautiful abbey and its vast operations had been shut down by the Soviets by October 1950, forcing all religious activity underground.

OUT WITH THE BOYS IN 1960 Fr. Anselm Nagy (with the hat and coat), superior of the Our Lady of Dallas monastery, walks in Rome with three young refugees of the 1956 Revolution (left to right): Br. Roch Kereszty, Br. Denis Farkasfalvy, and Br. Julius Lelóczy.



KISS OF PEACE Fr. Anselm Nagy (in the black clergy suit) gives a “kiss of peace” to Br. Matthew Kovacs in the courtyard of the Cistercian General House in Rome in April 1957. Others (l-r) are Br. Denis Farkasfalvy (obscured), Br. Roch Kereszty, Br. Zsombar Pollner, and Fr. Polycarp Zakar.

The two-year-old American incarnation of Zirc in Dallas might struggle, but the monks in Texas were determined to preserve the Cistercian Order’s 800-year-old Hungarian history. Fr. Anselm carried this responsibility with him wherever he went.

By 1957, the odds of its long-term survival appeared unclear.

On the one hand, the community in Dallas numbered 18, and was expected to grow as Hungarian Cistercians continued to assemble there.

The University of Dallas, where nine Cistercians comprised half of the faculty, was nearing the completion of its first school year.

And on March 30 (just weeks before this visit to Rome), construction had begun on the monastery near the university — the first permanent home for the Hungarian Cistercians since leaving their homeland.

Other signals suggested a less sanguine assessment.

None of the Cistercians teaching at UD had rated the title of professor in that first year, even those with doctorates and American teaching experience (e.g., Frs. Damian Szödényi, Ralph March, and Louis Lékai).

University administrators also had relegated the monks to the bottom of the pay scale (where they would remain for two decades).

Fr. Anselm’s negotiations on carving out a piece of land for the Cistercians had progressed about as smoothly as a root canal. Only with the bishop’s intervention had the Cistercians been able to pry 34 acres — 19 of which lay in flood plain — away from the 1,000 acres pledged to the university.

While insignificant in the scheme of UD’s holdings, the 34 acres would provide sufficient space to locate a secondary school adjacent to the monastery.

But there was a catch.

The university had not made full payment on their 1,000 acres, and so was unable to transfer title for the 34 acres. The Cistercians would have to finance the construction of the monastery without the use of the 34 acres as collateral.

UPON GREETING FR. ANSELM IN THE COURTYARD, the young brothers eagerly drank in every detail of their new superior’s

appearance, words, and demeanor.

“He looked very distinguished,” Fr. Julius Lelóczy recalled recently, “quite different from us.”

Despite the grueling transatlantic flight, Fr. Anselm appeared dapper in the crisp black suit of the American clergy (which the brothers had never seen before). His finely combed gray hair was slicked back, emphasizing his forehead and horn-rimmed glasses.

Delicate features, impeccable manners, and a quiet, calm voice oozed an aristocratic air.

“He gave us the impression of a world traveler,” added Fr. Julius. Naturally, the twenty-somethings thought Fr. Anselm quite old.

Fr. Anselm delivered a handshake, a formal “kiss of peace,” and a few words to each brother in the courtyard, his coat still draped over his arm, his hat in hand.

“I understand you are a law student,” Fr. Anselm said to Br. Denis Farkasfalvy. “Perhaps you will one day study canon law.” He smiled and turned to the next brother without waiting for a reply.

Fr. Anselm had not had time to read the biographical statements each brother had been asked to prepare for him. Otherwise, he would have known that Farkasfalvy detested studying the “systematized lies and hypocrisy” of Soviet law. Law school had simply served as his cover, or day job, as he studied for the priesthood (and a way to avoid military service).

After dinner, Fr. Anselm gathered the young brothers in his room at the General House.

“Don’t be afraid of America,” he began. “I need you in America.”

Fr. Anselm continued to speak but the words that followed were lost on his audience. The minds of the young monks had begun to wander back to Hungary and to their former superior and novice master, Fr. Lawrence Sigmond.

Br. Roch could still smell the stench of the old heater in Fr. Law-

rence's tiny, claustrophobic room on a chilling day in November 1956. There at a small table next to his bed, the novice master calmly and delicately broached the conclusion of Br. Roch's life in his beloved Hungary.

"There is a chance for you to go to Rome now," Fr. Lawrence said, emphasizing this window might shut quickly. Br. Roch stared at him in disbelief.

"But I would like to stay in Hungary," pleaded Br. Roch, who had just completed his stint with the Hungarian People's Army.

"Even if the situation was normal," Fr. Lawrence nodded knowingly, "I would send you to Rome."

Br. Roch had attended the Cistercian school in Budapest (until the Cistercians were banned from teaching there in 1948) and became a brother in 1951. The two knew each other well.

"I want you to be a theologian," Fr. Lawrence explained.

"My mother won't want to let me go," complained Br. Roch, who was living at home with his father, mother, and sister.

"I will talk to her," Fr. Lawrence assured him.

Fr. Lawrence, whose "day job" was translating technical texts from Russian into Hungarian, visited the Kereszty home and compassionately explained to Br. Roch's mother the extraordinary opportunity that lay before her son.

In light of the many sacrifices made and the dangers faced by this saintly man on behalf of her son, she found it impossible to refuse.

With his mother's approval, Fr. Lawrence instructed Br. Roch, "Tell them in Rome that you are there to study theology and that you will return to Hungary after you've completed your studies and the Soviets have left." Then he added, "Don't go to America."

As Fr. Anselm continued to share details of America and the Dallas foundation, thoughts of Fr. Lawrence and his instructions continued to fill the minds of the young monks.

For them, the underground vicar embodied the flickering flame of Zirc.

SOVIET AIRCRAFT, SNIPER FIRE, AND EXPLODING bombs sounded all too frequently in Budapest between December 1944 and February 1945. Hungary had tried its best to stay out of the hostilities of World War II, but now, as the Soviets chased the Nazis back toward Germany, Budapest stood in the way.

The Siege of Budapest (December 29, 1944 – February 13, 1945) became known as one of the bloodiest sieges of World War II. When the Soviets cut the German Army off at Budapest, Adolph Hitler declared it a Fortress City, sacrificing the Hungarian capital in an

attempt to slow the Soviet advance towards Vienna and Berlin.

The Cistercian school, church, parishes, study house, and residences in Budapest survived, having suffered relatively minor damage. But 80 percent of Budapest's buildings were destroyed, leaving the city with ruins and debris in its streets and the citizens without running water, electricity, or heat for months.

While many hoped that life eventually would return to normal and the Soviets would tire of Hungary, history would show that the country in 1945 remained floating near the top of a long and suffocating downward spiral.



UNDERGROUND VICAR
Fr. Lawrence Sigmond, novice master and vicar of the abbot of Zirc, played a dangerous game with the Soviet regime to safeguard his seminarians.

(Over the first three decades of the century, the Cistercians' work at their urban schools, located far from the abbey in Zirc, had diminished their monastic life.)

After the death of Abbot Adolf Werner in 1938, the beloved 44-year-old Fr. Wendelin would, as abbot, enthusiastically and prudently lead the 200+ Hungarian Cistercians toward this goal.

The order's "gentleman priests," who had enjoyed a highly visible social profile through their urban schools, would under the new abbot renew their commitment to community prayer life.

FOR SEVERAL YEARS AFTER THE WAR, as the Soviets worked to consolidate and organize their power, the Cistercian Order in Hungary carried on, albeit with less pomp and circumstance.

Abbot Wendelin Endrédy instructed two priests to leave Hungary in 1945. Fr. Anselm left first on an apparent assignment to continue his studies in Rome. But after Fr. Raymund Molnár joined him in Rome months later, the two traveled to America, to the small Cistercian monastery called Spring Bank in Okauchee, Wisconsin. They served as the scouts for a possible foundation for the Hungarian Cistercians in the Free World.

In the aftermath of World War II, the Soviet-installed government confiscated property, including the Cistercian Order's 40,000-acre estate, which had financed the vast operations of the Order (from churches and parishes to schools and missions).

The days of Zirc as a freely operating institution were numbered.

Provisionally, the Hungarian Cistercians already had begun to undergo internal changes that would strengthen their ability and their resolve to resist the Soviet onslaught.

A Visitation of the Holy See in 1937-38 had prompted new constitutions and a new order of liturgy. Subsequently, liturgical monasticism (e.g., community prayer) became an increasingly emphasized part of the Cistercians' daily lives.



The Cistercian schools remained open. The number of novices in the Order even grew after 1945.

But, all the while, the vise was tightening. The year of 1947 brought the nationalization of all the banks, mines, and major factories. Systematically, the Soviets were determined to shred, blast, and upend the flourishing Hungarian social order of the thirties.

Next, the Soviets took aim at Hungary's religious foundations.

In May of 1948, the Soviets banned the Cistercians from teaching in their schools. They began to arrest priests (including Fr. Thomas Fehér, who taught geography in Dallas until 1976) on false, often absurd, charges.

At this point, Abbot Wendelin began to direct additional priests — including Fr. Damian Szödényi, Fr. Louis Lékai, Fr. George Ferenczy, Fr. Odo Egres, and Fr. Lambert Simon — to leave the country.

Only an international uproar provoked by the arrest of Hungary's Cardinal Mindszenty in December of 1948 briefly slowed the pace of Soviet oppression. This cooling-off period gave Abbot Wendelin about 20 more months to salvage what he could. He did so without concern for his own safety and well-being.

The Soviet machinery of secret police, spies, and informants began to succeed in forcing Hungary's most talented and industrious citizens to flee or to comply (at least superficially).

As 1949 drew to a close, the state nationalized all the privately owned stores, even the smallest ones.

"Anyone who operated a business that employed even just one worker," recalled Fr. Julius, whose family owned several pastry shops, "was classified as an 'oppressor of the working class.'" The Soviets would make life miserable for such "bourgeois exploiters."

Hungary's social order disappeared into the shadows if it survived at all. The iron curtain had turned most of Hungary a bleak and lifeless gray.

In August 1950, the Soviets decreed that all religious orders were to be suppressed.

(The decree gave Abbot Wendelin little choice but to approve a final escape attempt. Twenty-one Cistercians — two priests and 19

REMEMBERING OLD TIMES Fr. Roch Kereszty, Fr. Denis Farkasfalvy, and Fr. Julius Leloczky hold the three volumes of the diary they kept of their days studying in Rome and traveling around Europe between 1956 and 1961.

seminarians — crossed the heavily guarded border and into Austria's Soviet zone. There, eight were apprehended, returned to Hungary, and imprisoned. Thirteen made it to Vienna and eventually to Rome. Of these, ten ended up in America; seven in Texas.)

On October 22, 1950, the Abbey of Zirc was emptied and locked. One week later, the abbot was arrested, interrogated, and tortured. The abbot would remain imprisoned for six years, until freed by the Freedom Fighters in 1956.

BY 1955, THE CISTERCIANS WHO LEFT HUNGARY in 1950 or before found themselves in America as directed by the Cistercian Order in Rome. This collection of individuals differed in age, talents, and personalities, as any group of Americans might.

But they also shared a great deal. They felt the pain of having seen Hungary destroyed by the Nazis and Soviets in 1944 and 1945. They witnessed (depending on the year of their departure) the devastating impact of the Soviet's tightening totalitarian grip.

They groped to stabilize their lives after suddenly leaving families, friends, and home. They waited as the Cistercian Order in Rome waded through a power vacuum (caused by two ill abbot generals), which delayed a decision on the destination for the Hungarians.

They suffered through the first few years of the new Cistercian Abbot General who, without knowing the true character of the Hungarian Cistercians, tried to impose a contemplative and agricultural lifestyle upon them.

Once in America, each struggled — as all immigrants must — to assimilate into a strange culture and to learn a new language.

Even those who had arrived in America in the forties — including Fr. Anselm, Fr. Louis, Fr. Damian, and others — had experienced uneven success.

Each progressed as their personalities and abilities dictated.

Fr. Anselm, a theologian and “numbers man,” quickly took to American thinking on business and fund raising. He excelled in finance but lacked social and language skills.

Fr. Louis, a talented teacher and student of history, possessed a steely determination to become proficient in the English language — he refused to speak Hungarian for the most part — a challenge he had underestimated.

The enthusiastic Fr. Damian, whose artistic talents had yet to emerge, possessed social skills that helped him acclimate quickly (with some help from his sister who lived in America).

Other Cistercians — who had arrived more recently and spent much of their time with other Hungarians at Spring Bank — had hardly even begun the process of assimilation.

This diverse group ranged in ages from their twenties to their forties. Many had been taught by “gentleman priests” in the thirties. “Gentleman priests” had directed many of their formations as brothers. Others, since the apostolic visitation of 1938, had undergone a formation shaped by the spirit of the reform movement.

Despite their varied backgrounds and perspectives, the Hungarian Cistercians had pursued a life as dictated by the reform movement — a triple vocation as priests, monks, and teachers — since the early forties. They remained dedicated to this ideal in Texas.

“My intention is that you transplant the vocation of the Hungarian Cistercians ... so that it may take root in American soil,” Abbot Wendelin had written to his American members in 1948. “Not for a minute should you forget the *finis specialis* (special purpose) of our congregation, which consists of an educational apostolate.”

With a piece of land for the monastery that was close to the university and large enough to accommodate a future prep school, the Cistercians could practice their lifestyle in a way that was never possible in Hungary (where the Abbey of Zirc was located far from its urban schools).

Although lively debates on many subjects would ensue, the newly immigrated Cistercian monks now enjoyed the freedom to pursue their mission. They were determined to make the most of it.

ON OCTOBER 8, 1950, A 14-YEAR-OLD oblate named Miklós Farkasfalvy beheld an eerie glimpse of the Cistercians at their magnificent abbey in the mountainous village of Zirc. He had come with his fellow oblates from the Benedictine school in Pannonhalma to receive his habit.

The imposing baroque structure, once the home of a hundred or more monks plus staff and novices, echoed with emptiness. Only Abbot Wendelin along with his secretly appointed vicar Fr. Lawrence, some coworkers, and 27 novices remained.

All were packing. The Soviet regime had dictated that the Cistercians vacate the premises by the following week, October 15. Still, the community of nearly 40 gathered four times a day for the divine office (i.e., community prayers) and twice for common meals.

“The abbot received us briefly,” Abbot Denis later recalled in a

memoir, “and the next day in a very small private ceremony, Fr. Lawrence put on us the grey habits of the oblates which we wore for less than 24 hours.”

According to custom, the youngest — Miklós — received his habit last. It would be 40 years before another would receive a habit in Zirc.

Despite the gloomy circumstances, Abbot Denis later wrote that “there was still an incomprehensibly happy atmosphere, translucent with a spiritual awareness of God’s presence, a spirit of exuberance and youth.”

“Fr. Lawrence appeared to me as the Gate Keeper of God’s Garden,” he recalled in his memoir, “Fr. Balint (who supervised this group of oblates) as my guardian angel, Abbot Wendelin as the Great Master of the Mysteries. And the rest of us loving brothers were involved in the most beautiful enterprise: monastic life in the service of an oppressed and persecuted church.”

ON A SUNDAY IN AUGUST 1953,

Gyula Lelőczky introduced himself to a gentleman dressed in a white suit near a statue of Beethoven in a Budapest park. The meeting had been orchestrated after Lelőczky had declared his intentions to become a Cistercian.

For three hours on a park bench, the gentleman in the white suit, Fr. Lawrence Sigmond, learned about the young man’s calling and described the difficult life of an underground seminarian.

Undeterred, Lelőczky began his postulancy the following week, attending novice classes every Sunday in a detached home in Buda, where a family with one son in the Cistercian Order had rented a spare room to two young men (who became Lelőczky’s novice mates).

“It was like a regular school,” recalled Fr. Julius recently. “One priest taught us the Psalms and the Bible, one taught the history of the Cistercian Order, and another provided spiritual instruction.”

On weekdays, Lelőczky lived the life of a university student. This served as his cover. On Sundays, he would tell his aunt and uncle, with whom he lived in Budapest, that he was studying at the university library.

“I dreamed of a Benedictine way of life so that I could stay in the same place (as opposed to a diocesan priest),” Fr. Julius reflected. “But the monastery and community life were only a dream for us.”

While Fr. Lawrence may not have known what he was training these young men for, he maintained a strict novitiate: no movies or novels. On the streets, they were not even to look at shop windows or advertisements. Each was expected to meditate, read spiritual texts, and keep a journal.

On Feb. 22, 1954, within the confines of their small “classroom,” seven young men received their religious names, a white scapular, and the all-white habit of the Cistercians during a Mass celebrated by Fr. Placid Csizmazia (Fr. Lawrence was absent).

“We only were allowed to wear our habit in that room on that day,” remembered Fr. Julius.

Another important precaution was taken — each religious name was revealed only to the recipient. No one but the Cistercian fathers leading the novitiate would know their religious names, safeguarding identities in case their signed pledges were discovered.

“When you are young,
you enjoy going against
the stated order of things.
We enjoyed adventure,
especially for the
sake of Christ.”

— Fr. Roch Kereszty,
on life as an underground seminarian

“We knew very little about the organization that Fr. Lawrence was running,” recalled Fr. Julius. “He did not want us to have too much information that could endanger the others.”

All together, there were four cells of novices and brothers studying for the priesthood in 1956, adding up to between 15 and 18 young men.

While the young men may not have known each other, they all knew and loved Fr. Lawrence for his spiritual guidance, his personal love for them, and his belief in their futures.

Life for this 47-year-old consisted of one cat-and-mouse game after another with the persistent, if not totally competent, Soviet security forces. He went to extraordinary lengths to avoid having his secret work threaten any of those around him.

“Fr. Lawrence,” said Fr. Roch recently, “risked his life daily on our behalf.”

“We only risked a year or two in jail,” he added.

“When you are young,” insisted Fr. Roch, “you enjoy going against the stated order of things. We enjoyed adventure, especially for the sake of Christ.”

AS FR. ANSELM CONCLUDED HIS PITCH to the brothers at the General House in April 1957, he may have believed that their little talk had gone well. He had communicated to the brothers that they were needed in Dallas; they would have a home and a job. They would not have to spend five or more frustrating years searching as Fr. Anselm, Fr. Louis, and other pioneers had.

But with 20 years and lots of history separating them, the brothers viewed things differently.

“We did not realize that Fr. Anselm was in a mode of trying to persuade people to join him,” Abbot Denis said recently in reflecting on the conversation in April 1957. “We did not leave Hungary because *he* had a problem.

“He didn’t seem to care why we left Hungary,” he added.

“It was just too soon for us to begin thinking of such a future,” Abbot Denis emphasized. “We were still grieving about the world we had left behind. We were still traumatized and we needed to be handled with kid gloves.”

Fr. Anselm’s perceived message, “You must go to America, like it or not,” struck a sour note with the instructions delivered by Fr. Lawrence, “Stay in Europe so you might return to Hungary one day.”

“We could not even locate Dallas on a globe in those days,” recalled Abbot Denis.

Most of the brothers studying in Rome had not known each other in Hungary, but their common experiences and new closeness led to fast friendships.

They shared with each other their activities as underground seminarians and their unanimous affection for Fr. Lawrence (and his lieutenants) who represented the martyred Zirc so well.

They knew each other’s sadness in parting from their families, friends, and homes.

Over the next several years, they compiled their experiences

from their four years in Rome into a diary. Capturing tales, photos, and cartoons of youthful exuberance, inside jokes, a summer in Paris, trips to abbeys in the Alps, and a vacation to Venice, the three volumes symbolize the bonds the brothers enjoyed.

Their stance on going to America softened during this time.

The young men had begun looking to the future, and during the early sixties, the future appeared dismal in Hungary and in Europe.

They hoped to preserve a chance to return to Hungary and to Europe; but for now, they accepted America as their next destination. (Fr. Anselm’s stories of the snakes, skunks, and scorpions that plagued the facility did, however, give them pause).

In Dallas, a second wing had been added to the monastery, and a third was contemplated. Fr. Anselm hoped that soon the community might earn recognition as an independent priory or abbey.

In pursuit of this goal, Fr. Anselm asked all Cistercians outside Hungary in 1961 to profess a vow of stability to Dallas (in place of their vow to Zirc). Most did so willingly, although some in Dallas and in Europe preferred to maintain their ties to Zirc.

Towards the young men in Rome, however, Fr. Anselm felt differently. They represented the long-term future of the community and he believed they should pledge their stability to Dallas.

Of the three, Br. Denis most eagerly took exception to Fr. Anselm’s position. The former law student believed stability to be a private matter, one outside the authority of his new superior.

Legalities aside, the issue kicked up a sea of emotions for Br. Denis and his two colleagues.

The brothers were prepared to give themselves to Fr. Anselm and the work in America (which they had never even visited); but, their very identities were tied up in the issue of stability.

Their difficult lives as underground seminarians had been inspired by an imprisoned abbot and nurtured by a vagabond novice master.

They felt they owed their vocations to Abbot Wendelin, Fr. Lawrence, and others of the persecuted church in Hungary who refused to buckle under Soviet oppression.

The brothers wanted to honor these beacons of faith, duty, and defiance that had shaped their values. So at their final vows, they pledged their stability to the Abbey of Zirc.

THE REFUGEES OF 1956 MOVED to Our Lady of Dallas between 1960 and 1964. Many of the differences which first surfaced in the late fifties and early sixties would continue to play a role in the development of the abbey and its prep school for years to come.

This gathering of beleaguered immigrants — each traumatized by his own dark chapter of Hungarian history — could not be expected to live without some difficulties.

But differences failed to distract the Cistercians from the goals inspired by Zirc. In fact, this Hungarian blend of temperaments, talents, and generations would forge on the North Texas prairie a powerful and winning destiny all its own.

One that would have made Abbot Wendelin and Fr. Lawrence proud.

“It was just too soon for us to begin thinking of [America]. We were still grieving about the world we had left behind.”

— Abbot Denis Farkasfalvy,
on the first meeting with Fr. Anselm in 1957

Standing together

When challenges call, leaders in the Class of 2009 respond

Story by Tom Pruitt

Photography by Jim Reisch

“LAST FALL, WHEN the first boy came in to send his first on-line application,” remembered College Counselor Janet Bucher-Long, “eight others came with him.”

“They cheered when he hit the ‘payment’ button, and threw a party around him once he hit ‘submit,’” she laughed.

“His application was the first for all of them — they threw themselves into his ‘moment’ as if it were their own.”

Such triumphant moments have been many for the Class of 2009. And in each, the student who emerged to lead the way found his peers at his back.

“They are truly remarkable for the genuine support they give one another,” said Bucher-Long.

STUDY BUDDIES

Presidential Scholar candidate Michael Lawson '09 (center) reviews an assignment with (l-r) Austin Branch '09, and Will Garnett '09.





“Preparing for the Ring Ceremony speech last year definitely changed the way I looked both at my class and the larger Cistercian community,” reflected Paul DiFiore ’09.

Excitement and nerves accompanied DiFiore’s pride in being selected to deliver this important address, marking the class’ first ceremonial step toward becoming seniors.

“I had always liked my class and wanted to fit in, but it was basically me against the curriculum. My goals as a student was pretty narrowly focused.”

“But for the Ring Ceremony,” he said, “I was supposed to talk about our legacy as a class to an audience of 500 people, and I didn’t really know what that legacy was.” Fear of failure drove him “to really observe the class and try to understand what made us different; that process of observation really changed me.”

For the first time he was looking at the class as a whole and his role in it.

“Writing and delivering the speech was an amazing experience,” he said. “Once I had finished the speech, I felt like we had been accepted into the Cistercian community in a way that was permanent and lifelong, that we had done it together as a class and as friends, and that I had made a speech that expressed that — it was an awesome day!”

Carson Chapman, winner of the St. Bernard Gold Award last year, credits the class in shaping him into a leader. (The St. Bernard Gold award is given to the one student within the junior class whom the faculty deems the best representative of academic leadership, moral integrity, and all-around excellence.)

LEADING TOGETHER The Ursuline production of the musical *Rumors* featured four Cistercian seniors in leading roles (l-r): Will Schleier ’09, Pablo Muldoon ’09, Carson Chapman ’09, and Paul DiFiore ’09.

“I don’t think I would have ever taken the initiative or had the incentive to get involved with acting or the *Informer* if it weren’t for the generally supportive environment within the class,” Chapman emphasized.

“I have so much respect for so many guys in my class; I think we feed off each other’s success. My St. Bernard award — and I’m really not kidding here — actually belongs to the class.”

Chapman and DiFiore along with Pablo Muldoon ’09 and Will Schleier ’09 share the title of the class “actors.” The four friends excelled not just on the Cistercian stage (in the annual play and senior one acts), but on the Ursuline stage as well (in plays, musicals, and one acts).

Muldoon led the charge to the stage, inspired by the bright lights that had shined on Cistercian actor Juan Muldoon ’05, his older brother. The junior Muldoon convinced DiFiore to try out with him for the Ursuline fall play during their freshman year.

They both soon found themselves trying out for everything that came along. DiFiore then convinced Chapman the following year to join in trying out for the Ursuline musical. Then this year, Schleier joined them and all four played leading male roles in the Ursuline fall play.

Schleier, DiFiore and Muldoon have managed all their activ-



ity while maintaining outstanding grade-point averages throughout high school. In fact, at the end of the second quarter, which also concludes the toughest single semester in the Cistercian curriculum, an unprecedented 11 students earned a 4.00 (straight As).

“The formation really does start in Form I,” remarked Schleier, editor of the school newspaper, *The Informer*, “and it doesn’t let up until we graduate. We all take the same subjects and we all want to excel at them, but another part of our formation here is that we help each other, that we try to bring everybody to the top.”

This mutually supportive ethos promotes a sense of balance, of well-roundedness. But it is tested as the rigors of the curriculum ratchet up each year during Upper School.

By senior year, each student is taking college levels courses in calculus, science, English, and history in addition to courses in theology and a foreign language.

“Leadership in our class,” reflected Michael Lawson ’09, this year’s Davey O’Brien nominee and a Presidential Scholar candidate, “isn’t a selfish thing.”

“Well okay, maybe a little,” he acknowledged, “but when you look around the room, what you’re thinking is, ‘These are my friends; how could I not help them?’”

Amidst a hectic schedule, sometimes such help must take place as circumstances allow. Even if that means talking Dante during a football practice.

As the team ran through drills last fall, Lawson walked a fellow senior through a challenging English paper.

The difficulty factor in this tutoring session was magnified by

Lawson’s position on the offensive line while his “study buddy” stood across the line of scrimmage at linebacker.

“By the end of practice I think he knew enough to write a decent essay on Brunetto Latini: ‘Talent and Virtue in Dante’s *Inferno*,’” Lawson said. “That made me feel really good.”

Mitch Miller had much to lose by coming to Cistercian his freshman year.

Quarterback of the football team and a well-respected leader at his previous school, he left it all behind to jump into the very competitive arena at Cistercian.

“I was definitely just another small fish,” Miller remembered. “and I knew it was going to be hard. But I just told myself that I would look for ways I could fit in, for things that I had in common with my new classmates.”

Besides excelling academically, which he did from the start, Miller also discovered a common interest in athletics, where he soon became known as one of those players who leaves it all on the field, every play, every game.

“Once you know that your team is behind you, you’ve got to play that way.”

“The move was worth it in so many ways,” Miller insisted. “Perhaps most importantly, the courses and the teachers I’ve had brought out so much more in me than I thought I had. I’m really prepared for whatever comes next.”

“We believe in the genuine formative power of rigorous academic endeavor,” said Greg Novinski, dean of students. “The boys grow in spirit and character as they struggle to use their minds in worthwhile intellectual pursuits.”

It is the job of the administration and faculty, Novinski continues, “to keep the curriculum grounded in the truth, to keep it real. If we succeed, then it becomes a sturdy scaffold useful to our students in building better, happier, more productive lives.”

“Our individual successes
rub off on each other.
One person steps up in one area
and somebody else is challenged
to step up somewhere else.”

— Kevin Hedrick ’09

Trevor Wylie ’09, winner of the James M. Collins Award, the highest recognition given at Cistercian for community service, remembers freshman year a bit differently.

He was struggling with his grades to the point that he was no longer sure the effort was worth it and was considering a transfer. He credits Fr. Paul McCormick, the faculty sponsor for community service, with his turn-around.

“Fr. Paul told me not to worry about the grades,” Wylie said. “He advised me just do the things I was passionate about, and the grades would take care of themselves.”

“He knew how much I loved community service, so he gave me plenty of opportunities to get involved. It became pretty much my passion, and, sure enough, my grades — I guess because I wasn’t stressing out over them any more — did improve.”

Putting other people first, getting his classmates involved, watching



the younger students throw themselves into various community service projects all make Wylie very excited about being at Cistercian.

“We have a very compassionate class,” he said. “If there’s a need — somebody breaks a leg or there’s a pretty serious illness in somebody’s family — we’re ready to jump on it. Eight years together has given us a closeness I can’t really describe; it runs deep.”

“Our individual successes rub off on each other,” said Kevin Hedrick ’09 who serves as president of the Student Government.

“One person steps up in one area and somebody else is challenged to step up somewhere else,” added Hedrick, last year’s nominee for the Catholic Foundation award. In addition to school sports at Cistercian, Hedrick finds time to captain a club lacrosse team.

“Having the same foundation of beliefs helps keep the competition friendly.”

“It is essential,” Novinski asserted, “that the whole process culminate with humility, or at least the beginnings of humility.”

“It helps,” he suggested, “when you have world-renowned theologians like Abbot Denis and Fr. Roch teaching math and basic theology to high school students.

“That kind of example speaks louder than anything our mission statement might say.”

Friends also teach friends humility.

After making a 4.0 freshman year, Walter Herring ’09 began helping out classmates with their homework, even personal problems.

One classmate felt his support somewhat overbearing and offhandedly dubbed him “self-righteous.”

At the time he just chalked up the comment to jealousy. But more recently, it made him reflect on his true motivation.

“I’m a people pleaser,” Herring said, “but what I didn’t realize

FINDING HIMSELF Walter Herring ’09 helped lead the charge as the football team’s smallest offensive lineman for the past two years. In the classroom, he has learned to help classmates “because it is truly for somebody else’s betterment.”

was how selfish I was.

“I wanted the praise,” he admitted. “I wanted to be known as the nicest guy in the universe.”

“I had a big lesson to learn, and I didn’t really learn it until this year,” said Walter Herring. “I love helping people; it will probably be a big part of whatever I do in life.”

Surrounded now by a classroom full of friends, he is compelled to seek an even deeper level of service, one which “seeks the internal fortitude to offer aid without seeking acclaim.”

Every time he now starts to offer his help, he asks himself, “Why am I doing this — because I want people to like me or because it is right, because it is truly for somebody else’s betterment.”

“It has always seemed to me,” says Form Master Gary Nied, “that true leadership grows out of a depth of moral concern. This group of guys has risen up as a class, as friends who, at various crucial moments, have awakened the conscience in each other.

“There is an abundance of skill and talent in this class, as there is in every class, but they have already begun to learn a very valuable lesson: when you put your talent to use for a greater purpose, you give it a power to ‘enkindle and enlighten’ that transcends your own narrow goals.

“That opens it up to grace.”

Then, it becomes a legacy truly worth claiming.

tptrit@cistercian.org

Sophs promise bright future for cross country

The 2008 cross country season saw Cistercian rebuild aggressively after losing 10 runners from last year's team.

"Several young guys stepped up," said Ryan Gorman, coach of the cross country team.

"**Ron Hammond '11** and **Isaac Johnston '11** emerged as our two top runners," he said.

"And they received great support from two seniors who had never run before, **Pablo Muldoon '09** and **Trevor Wiley '09**," Gorman added. "Plus, we had the benefit of **Paul Pesek '09** returning after sitting out his junior year."

"These seniors provided a big boost and

helped us to finish in the top 10 in almost all the meets," Gorman said.

At SPC, Johnston finished 14th, earning All-SPC honors.

Hammond won Gorman's vote as the most improved runner.

"Ron impressed me with how hard he ran, and the improvement that he made," Gorman said.

"We have high hopes for next year."

EXTREME RUNNING Cross country runner **Isaac Johnston '11** ran to a 14th place finish in the SPC meet at Fort Worth Country Day.



Photos by Noah Anderson '11

Hawks fall just short in battle for title shot

The 2008 campaign came down to the season's final game in a classic match-up for a spot in the SPC Division II title game.

The Hawks, with a newly tailored run-it-

down-your-throat offense, entered the game at 7-2 (with an SPC loss to Trinity Valley) and leading the Metrplex in rushing yards.

All Saints (also with one SPC loss to the

Trojans) featured a pass-happy offense led by a skillful passer and a bevy of tall, strong, and fast receivers.

"The kids and the staff really bought into the new system," said Steve McCarthy, head coach. "It was exciting to do something different that took advantage of our strength at the running back position."

All Saints struck early and often, leaving the Hawks in a 21-0 hole with two minutes left in the first quarter.

"A lot of people had to be thinking that it was over at that point," McCarthy said.

But in perhaps the most exciting second quarter ever at Hawk Field, the Hawks came screaming back.

After two scores by **Connor Haley '09** and **Mitch Miller '09** and just a field goal for the Saints, disaster struck in the form of a 59-yard touchdown pass to Shaun Younger, All Saints' top receiver (the PAT failed).

But a 77-yard touchdown run by **Holden Godat '09** and a 7-yard run by **Steve Imai-zumi '10** left the Hawks behind 30-28.

The teams traded scores in the second half (with All Saints converting a two-point try) leaving the score at 38-35, All Saints.

The Hawks embarked on a long drive to the 10-yard line when the ball was stripped from senior workhorse **Will Garnett '09** and returned for an All Saints score.

The climactic game saw both teams generate over 400 yards a piece in offense.

Five Hawks earned All SPC honors: Miller, Godat, Haley, **Aaron Olson '10**, and standout offensive tackle **Addison White '09**, who led the dominating offensive line.



Photos by John Branch

BIG PLAYS (clockwise from below) **George Adesayna '11** breaks into the open. **Connor Haley '09** scores in the 3rd to put Cistercian ahead 35-30. **Holden Godat '09** on a 77-yard TD run in the 2nd period.



The gift of Liberty God gave to the Cistercians

The trail boss of this outfit, David Stewart, writes in this edition about the differences among the original Cistercian settlers in Texas — who saw their country savaged by the Siege of Budapest and fall victim to Socialism — and the Cistercians who escaped in 1956 — who grew into the priesthood beneath, and in spite of, the full weight of Hungary's new overlords.



Afterthoughts

Smokey Briggs '84

working together to make something out of nothing.

Me, I'm more of a big brush strokes kind of guy — like Picasso, only with words (and without the flair for selling a bunch of scribbles as art).

David's story brought to my mind one word: Liberty.

The men who came to Irving, Texas and built Cistercian did not leave Hungary and immigrate to America to take advantage of a good exchange rate, or to enjoy cool summer Texas breezes wafting off the Trinity River.

Think about it. They left everything they had ever known: Family, friends, climate, architecture, language, culture, customs, everything.

They left home. Forever, for all they knew.

Why? What were they searching for in Irving, Texas?

Liberty. In the instance of the Cistercians it was Liberty to serve God, as they felt called. To do so, they had to be free.

I would argue to you that Liberty is a God-given right of man. Liberty is not granted by Constitutions, or Declarations, or governments, or by democratic vote. It is given by God to each of us — a gift, a birthright, a treasure.

That is how I often think of Liberty — as an actual gift handed to me by my God. Think how you would cherish and guard some trinket or bauble if God himself presented it to you.

"God gave me this," you would say as you gripped it hard in your hand. What would you trade it for?

What would you trade it for, even if it were just a trinket, just a reminder of His love?

And Liberty is so much more than a trinket or memento.

We live in a nation that arguably allows men and women more Liberty than any other in the world.

Joyous words right?

Actually, they make me sad, for two reasons.

First, the words, "nation, allows and Liberty," used in one sentence, should never make a free man smile. No one has the right to allow me my Liberty. It is a gift from God.

Often though, this seems to be how we think of our situation — that we are allowed our freedom. As a people, Americans seem content with that.

Second, these days, the bar is pretty low. Even if your belly drags

in the sand less than all your neighbors', you are still a snake.

After 43 years on this earth, Liberty has become my personal yardstick.

If something promotes Liberty, I support it. If it does not, I fight it. If someone champions Liberty he is my friend. If he is willing to trade this gift for some worldly good, he is my enemy.

These days, and for many decades before my birth for that matter, it seems Americans have been too willing to trade a little bit of their gift.

We traded it for the promise of security and safety, we tax it away from ourselves for bridges and roads, we traded it for the promise of better this and that, we traded it to save lives, and we traded it for the common good.

The world does not seem to lack for seemingly worthy causes — even if the price is a small bit of God's gift to man.

And, each year, we seem to possess a little less of our Liberty.

I wonder, if instead of a state of being, if Liberty really were a medallion handed to us by our Creator that we could wear around our neck, if we would trade bits of it for anything?

And, I wonder, when those first Hungarian priests came to Texas, did they come here for the promise of good roads, and safety, and better this and that, or did they come here because here they could be free?

email: smokey@pecos.net

Think how you would cherish and guard some trinket or bauble if God himself presented it to you.



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golf**

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Aim for goals that rely on your will and God's grace

A human being is a goal-setting animal. He cannot act consciously and freely nor can he abstain from acting without at least a half-conscious goal.

Of course, more serious goal setting takes place before entering a new stage in life, such as enrolling in college, choosing a job or graduate school and, above all else, when deciding to get married.

Success or failure, happiness or bitterness depends to a large extent on what goals we have set for ourselves.

Fortunately, it is never too late in this life to readjust or even fundamentally change these goals provided we still have the energy to



On Prayer

Fr. Roch Kereszty

start over again.

Let me concentrate today on goal setting with your fiancée before you decide to get married.

I tell engaged couples who ask me to prepare them for marriage to set such basic goals for themselves that can be achieved under any set of external circumstances; goals that depend solely upon the couple's will and God's grace; goals that not even the worst tragedy can frustrate.

I recommend that their fundamental goal should be to grow together in loving God and loving each other. Blessed Charles IV, the last king of Hungary and the last emperor of Austria, said the same thing in much simpler terms.

When Charles asked Zita to marry him, he told her, "From now on our goal will be to lead each other to heaven."

Of course, this attitude entails the acceptance of children from God, if that is God's will. This over-arching goal may and should coexist, in fact, with an indefinite number of concrete conditional goals on which the couple agree. But the basic common goal should

depend completely on themselves and on God.

What a joy and what an incredible freedom derive from setting this fundamental goal: to grow in God's love and in loving each other, to nurture a common will which relies on the inexhaustible fountainhead of the sacrament of marriage.

As long as the couple adhere to this agreement, they can defy any adversity. All that happens, sickness and health, success and failure, depression or flourishing of the economy, promotion to a great job or the loss thereof, all actually serve the couple in growing to trust in

God and trust each other.

Even if one of the spouses becomes seriously ill, the illness can become a challenge revealing the full depth of their love for each other and for God.

Nothing, absolutely nothing, except their own change of will, can destroy the peace and lasting joy of such a marriage.

At the end of World War I King Charles lost his empire and his crown and was exiled with his large family to the Portuguese island Madeira, where he had to collect firewood and mushrooms in the forest to keep his family from freezing and starving, but he died a happy man.

Both he and Queen Zita fulfilled the promise they had made on the day of their wedding. They led each other and their children to God.

It is never too late for a couple to set this over-arching goal for their marriage. They can always reevaluate their lives under the impact of life's challenges and tragedies and so eventually discover the wisdom of the cross.

My hope is that at the end of your lives, each of you "Cistercian couples" will be able to look back at your joint lives in such a way that gratitude will well up in your hearts toward God and that you will be able to sincerely confess, "God has given us infinitely more happiness, more peace and joy than we had ever dared to hope for."

email: fr-roch@cistercian.org

ADVICE FOR COUPLES

All that happens, sickness and health, success and failure, ... promotion to a great job or the loss thereof, all serve the couple in growing to trust in God and trust each other.

calendar

APRIL

- 9 Alumni Assoc./Booster Golf Tourney
- 29 Abbot's Circle Dinner

MAY

- 16 Commencement
- 29 Closing Ceremonies

JUNE

- 5-7 Reunions Weekend

CISTERCIAN
PREPARATORY SCHOOL
3660 CISTERCIAN ROAD
IRVING, TEXAS 75039