

The

For family, friends, and alumni of Cistercian Preparatory School

CCISTERCIAN IRVINGONTINUUM

March 2003

*A 40th anniversary
retrospective, Part Two*

Fr. Denis Farkasfalvy,
headmaster, 1969-74, 1975-81,
and the gymnasium in 1972

Tough love

It took thick skin
to love Cistercian
in the seventies

Dear Cistercian Families, Friends, and Alumni,

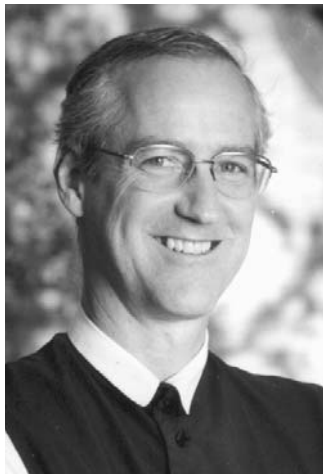


Photo by Jim Reisch

This edition of *The Continuum* features part two of our 40th anniversary retrospective. Much of it tells a behind-the-scenes story seldom heard, one which includes some surprising revelations. The tale of this difficult period reveals much about the stable institution we know today. In our second feature, you will learn about Matt Miga. While Matt appears to be a calm, introspective senior to most at Cistercian, he has another very dynamic side: that of a heady Internet entrepreneur. Both these features remind us that character is frequently formed off stage, beyond our view. That theme also applies to Tom Pruitt and Fr. Pascal, both of whom made a big splash in the past few weeks.

“Familiar Portals,” Dr. Pruitt’s collection of 52 poems about Cistercian went on sale March 9 at the Book Fair. Twenty-five years ago — toward the end of “the difficult seventies” — Tom Pruitt was hired in the middle of the year due to a sudden vacancy in the English department. The newly married PhD candidate agreed to teach at the prep school temporarily. Three years later, standing before a classroom full of students, Dr. Pruitt realized he was home. He is now teaching his second generation of students and still chauffeuring Cistercian students to school, though no longer in his green “vomit comet.” Thank you, Dr. Pruitt, for sharing the gift of your private side with us. The superb poetry of “Familiar Portals” is a very special gift that will help the entire Cistercian community celebrate our 40th anniversary.

In the news section, you will learn that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has donated \$250,000 to Cistercian to fund a scholarship for minority students. This wonderful gift would not have been made if not for the quiet, unassuming Fr. Pascal. For over 30 years, Fr. Pascal has served the Cistercian community and parishioners at St. Monica’s (where he became friends with Melinda French and her family). In a very real sense Fr. Pascal has been a teacher among us. As the bookkeeper for the abbey and school, he taught us the value of dedicated, absolutely reliable work. And as a very popular confessor at Cistercian and St. Monica’s, he taught us about compassion and forgiveness. We are grateful to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for their generous gift and for honoring a man who has stood for so long off stage and out of the spotlight.

Please enjoy the two feature stories in this issue of *The Continuum* and give thanks for that which may have remained unseen until now, especially the gifts of our classmates, colleagues, friends, and teachers.

Fr. Peter Verhalen ’73
Headmaster

F E A T U R E S

CISTERCIAN
PREPARATORY
SCHOOL



ADMINISTRATION

Rev. Peter Verhalen '73
Headmaster

Rev. Bernard Marton
*Assistant Headmaster
College Counselor*

Greg Novinski '82
Dean of Students

Robert J. Haaser
Director of Admissions

Michael Burns '81
*Director of Development
and Alumni Relations*

Dan Lee
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Right now, the most provocative question is the advent of the new gymnasium stimulate a major C.P.S.? I am one of the few people who significant metamorphosis will occur. Sure the P.E. classes in poor weather and extend what about the Cistercian syndrome? Can the cure the losing tradition which has settled pride and spirit? Tom will only tell. Page 11

The past issue of The Informer contained a short article regarding the advent of the new gymnasium and its effect on the "Cistercian syndrome". Concerning the former we anxiously await its completion, and concerning the latter, we have had about all we can take. The Cistercian syndrome is a bunch of horsie-stuff! Gymnasium for 14

BY GARY LUCIDO
coming was a success, can't complain about that. won our game, didn't lose much on the dance, and everybody enjoyed themselves. But most importantly managed to make \$300.00 the gate. nevertheless, all was not perfect about Saturday, October 14. I was shocked and called to suddenly realize direction that our little

40th anniversary
RETROSPECTIVE
Part Two

Tough love 6
In the turbulent seventies, Fr. Denis needed thick skin to weather storms at both the school and the abbey.

14 going on 41

An Internet entrepreneur at 14, Matt Miga '03 is now ready and waiting for the next big opportunity.

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Cover photography courtesy of the Cistercian Prep School Archives

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.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Gift from Gates Foundation honors Fr. Pascal

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has generously awarded Cistercian Preparatory School a \$250,000 grant to endow a scholarship in honor of Fr. Pascal.

The scholarship will be awarded annually to minority students who demonstrate financial need.

In the present Form I, 23

percent of the students come from racially diverse backgrounds. For the 2002-2003 school year, financial aid was awarded to 14 percent of the student body. Through their contributed services, the Cistercian monks fund more than half of those scholarships.

Fr. Pascal has served the school for decades by assisting with the bookkeeping and participating in the sacramental ministry to the students (he is the students' favorite confessor).

A long-time friend of Melinda French Gates, co-founder of the foundation (as well as her parents Ray and Elaine French), Fr. Pascal was invited to perform the Gates' wedding.

"We cherish Fr. Pascal as a special friend to our immediate and extended family," said Mr. & Mrs. French. "He provides wonderful spiritual inspiration and wise insights when he shares so many special occasions with us."

"We are very grateful to the Gates Foundation for honoring such a dear man in this wonderful way," said **Fr. Peter Verhalen '73**.



Photo by Jim Reisch

OLD FRIENDS Fr. Pascal (center) sits with Elaine and Ray French, parents of Melinda Gates, at the groundbreaking ceremonies February 21.

NOTEWORTHY

■ Three of Cistercian's most senior faculty members took time out recently to tend to their health. **Fr. Matthew, Rodney Walter**, and **Abbot Denis** all underwent back surgery in the last few months. Abbot Denis bounced back quickly, teaching classes just 10 days after surgery. **Peter Heyne '97** is standing in for the irreplaceable Fr. Matthew in Form I Latin. **Laurence Neuhoff** has stepped in for Mr. Walter in Form III Texas History and Form I Social Studies, although the old pro will be back in the saddle by April, when it's time for the Texas History trip.

■ Michelle and **Rob Kowalski** (varsity soccer coach and English Lab teacher) are proud to announce the birth of Ayden (6 lbs. 10 oz. by 19 3/4").

■ Next year's Form I will include a number of legacies, including the sons of **Jim Hartnett '75**, **Peter Smith '74**, and **Joseph Shea '78** (wife **Kelly Shea** teaches music). It also will include the sons of **Tom Pruitt** (English), and **Steve McCarthy** (head coach, varsity football). The son of **Cambria Reinsborough** (science) will enter Form IV.

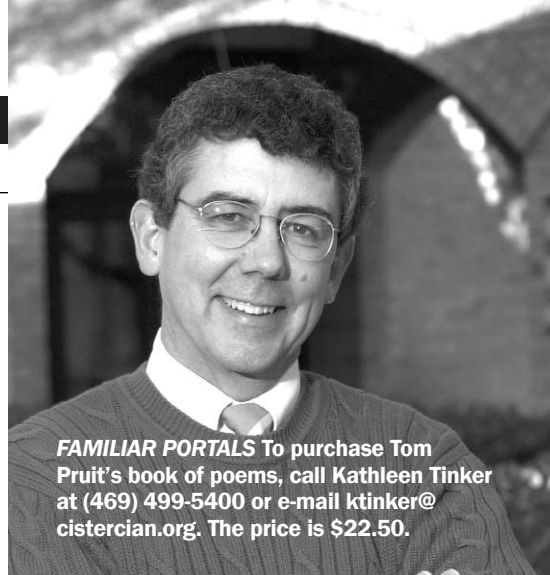


Photo by Jim Reisch

FAMILIAR PORTALS To purchase Tom Pruitt's book of poems, call Kathleen Tinker at (469) 499-5400 or e-mail ktinker@cistercian.org. The price is \$22.50.

2003 BOOKFAIR

Pruitt's book of poems and Molanphy's memoir featured

This year's Bookfair — which took place March 9 — featured two works by ones near and dear to the school. Tom Pruitt, who has taught English for 25 years at Cistercian, recently published *Familiar Portals* and **Tom Molanphy '89** recently released his first book, *Following Mateo*, a memoir of the two years he spent living and teaching in Belize.

Pruitt's collection of 52 poems reflects his love and attentive eye to everything Cistercian. "He captures the peculiar magic both of Cistercian as a place and teaching as a vocation," said Jonathan Leach. The book was written in honor of the Cistercian Faculty. In fact, all profits from the book will go to the school's Professional Development Fund.

Molanphy's book depicts his relationship with a 50-year-old Mayan named Mateo and "deals with volunteering, trying to understand another culture, and grappling with one's own spirituality," he said. The book is available through www.trafford.com.

COMPETITIONS

MS and US students flex their muscles

Winter is a busy time for competitions. Here is a quick recap of some of the results.

Knowledge Master Open (KMO) is a nationwide competition in which participants answer 200 multiple choice questions. Middle School participants placed fifth in the state, 126th in the US, and 10th in the national small schools division. The Upper

School fared even better, ranking fourth in the state, 83rd in the nation and first in the national small schools division.

On Feb. 8, Cistercian Middle School students won their fifth consecutive team championship at the DFW Mid-Cities Chapter Math Counts contest on the campus of UTA.

Cistercian team members were **Stephen Fox '07**, **Kyle Mitchell '07**, **Michael Montoya '07**, and **Konrad Stoick '07**.

Of the 100 or so students participating in the event,

Cistercian grabbed the top three spots, with **Travis Sandy '08** taking first place, **Daniel Carrington '08** second place, and **Stephen Fox '07** third place.

The four team members named above advanced to the state championship March 1st in Austin along with individual winners, Travis Sandy and Daniel Carrington.

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Students win praise at Rotary speech contest

Four Cistercian students participated for the first time in the annual "Four Way Speech Contest," sponsored by Rotary International.

Each student delivered a

5-7 minute speech to the membership of the Preston Center Rotary Club on the implications of Rotary's Four Way Test:

- Is it the Truth?
- Is it Fair to all concerned?
- Will it build Goodwill and Friendships?
- Will it benefit all concerned?

Daniel Foose '04 won a check for \$100 and advances to the district-wide competition March 22. **Alejandro Hernandez '05**, **Daniel Mitura '05**, and **A. J. Minich '04** received \$50 each.

"Several members [of the Preston Center Rotary Club] came up to me after the meeting and said this was the best set of speeches they've ever heard," said Robert Bruyere, director of the contest.

"These speeches made me think," Bruyere added.



Photo by Jim Reisch

MUD FLIES Pictured at the rain-soaked groundbreaking ceremony for the new gym, February 21 are (from left) Fr. Peter Verhalen '73, Warren Andres '77, Pat Villareal (co-chair of the Campaign), Peter Smith '74 (co-chair), and architect Gary Cunningham '72.

NEW GYM

History recalled at ceremony

Inside the old gym for the groundbreaking of the new gym, Abbot Denis reflected in his remarks that it was just over 30 years ago that the old gym was dedicated.

"Peter Verhalen was a senior," he recalled.

Fr. Peter, **Peter Smith '74**, and Pat Villareal also addressed the small crowd. Abbot Denis blessed the site as part of the ceremony.

Rodger Harrison of Andres Construction expects the new facility will be ready for play in the fall.

Johnston dedicates Moroney Award to his father

"I pity next year's winner," commented **Dr. Steve Johnston '71** as the applause died down after **Fr. Peter Verhalen '73** received last year's Jim and Lynn Moroney Award.

This year's gathering of nearly 150 alumni, parents, faculty, and friends

was not disappointed.

Abbot Denis delivered a blessing in which he noted the absence of Dr. Louis Johnston, Steve's dad.

"The man I miss the most tonight," he said, "is Louis Johnston, who wanted to be here so badly and is ill at this time ... He has saved my life several times and I would have loved to express my gratitude to him once more."

Dr. Louis Johnston began providing care for the Cistercians before the school was founded. He also served on Cistercian's original school board and is a *confrater* of the abbey.

Charlie Williams '70 delivered an uproarious introduction in which he also paid tribute to Louis Johnston and described the Johnston clan "as the nicest, most genuine family that I have ever been associated with."

In his speech, Johnston said, "I am so proud to be a graduate of Cistercian and I want to do whatever I can for the school.

"As far as the cardiology care I've

provided the fathers," he said, "that's an honor and a privilege that's been handed down to me by my father. When I see some of the priests, like Fr. Denis, we spend about 15 seconds on medicine and then talk for about an hour about other things."

Johnston mentioned both Fr. Damian and Fr. Denis as great influences in his life.

He also thanked his family and then addressed his father.

"This night was probably more important to him than anybody, including myself," Johnston said. "He had the stroke yesterday. I wish he could be here and that's why they're filming it so he can watch it.

"I want to tell him on this film — because doctors are the worst patients — you've taken care of thousands of stroke patients, you know its going to be a lot of hard work, so you've just got to do it. I love you. And this [holding up the plaque] goes to you."

Somewhere out there, someone was saying, "I pity next year's winner."



Photo by Jim Reisch

FULL OF HEART Dr. Steve Johnston '71 in his cardiology clinic at Baylor Hospital.

Tough love

In the turbulent seventies, Fr. Denis needed thick skin to weather storms at both the school and the abbey. Through his dedication, Cistercian Prep emerged from this difficult decade as one of the area's top private schools.

BY DAVID STEWART '74

THE CLICKETY-CLICK OF THE SCHOOL'S noisy 16-millimeter film projector tapped time in the dark. Gathered in the old physics lab (the space now occupied by Form VII), Upper School students had spent the morning of October 15, 1969 discussing the Vietnam War protests. Now, rather unexpectedly, the boys had become engrossed by the images of another revolt, one captured in flickering black-and-white 14 years earlier.

The baby boomers had seen a lot of frantic newsreel footage in the late sixties. Television had brought home the growing carnage in Vietnam, the exploits of the Chicago Seven, the riots in Watts, the madness of Charles Manson, and the assassinations of Rev. Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy, to mention just a few.

Nevertheless, this film jolted them. Produced by Time/Life, the documentary chronicled the violent chaos of the Hungarian Revolution of October 23 - November 4, 1956. These were the twelve days that had uprooted so many of their teachers. Soviet soldiers collided with Hungarian university students in guerrilla fighting along Budapest's elegant avenues. Men against boys. Tanks vs. handguns. Totalitarianism crushing democracy.

In the dark, 33-year-old Fr. Denis Farkasfalvy took the opportunity to relax and savor the disaster averted. The day before, things had looked pretty bleak.

In the afternoon, **Tom Martin '70** had engaged Fr. Denis in a high-profile shouting match on the rights of students to protest the war. The debate was prompted by a nationwide moratorium planned for the next day at colleges and high schools. The event's organizers wanted students to halt "business as usual" for a day to draw attention to the anti-war movement. Martin, who was headed for the Naval Academy and believed strongly

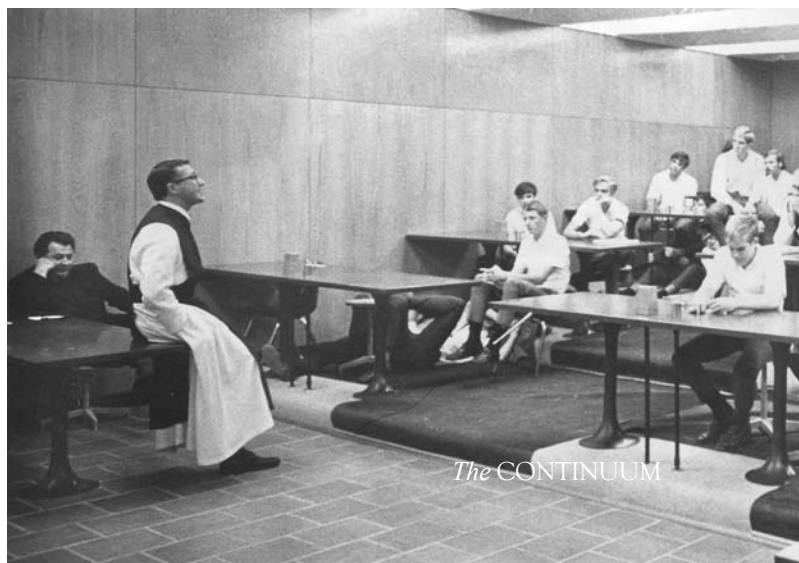
in the war, passionately expressed his belief that students had the right to express their opinion. Fr. Denis threatened severe disciplinary action for anyone who missed school to participate in anti-war demonstrations.

That night, the young headmaster received an urgent phone call from Dr. Louis Johnston.

"The boys are trying to stage a boycott tomorrow," warned the school board member and father of sons **Kevin Johnston '70** and **Steve Johnston '71**. "Fr. Denis, you must come up with a plan to keep them in school."

Fr. Denis reacted quickly. He called **Monte Atkinson '70**, Cistercian's first student government president, who was spearheading the eleventh-hour effort to boycott school.

"Remember, Monte," Fr. Denis said, "It's the war you are protesting against, not the school. I have to enforce the rule against truancy if you do not show up tomorrow. But, if you come, we will cancel classes and hold a discussion on the war with invited speak-



ers and participation by the faculty.” Atkinson agreed.

Fr. Denis then notified the respective Form Masters of the plan and collared Fr. Emilian Novak, a Cistercian who was pursuing a doctorate in political science at UD.

“You are needed at the prep school in the morning,” Fr. Denis explained.

Much to Fr. Denis’ relief, everyone showed up the next day. The fact that several sported black armbands irritated him only mildly. “I ignored the armbands,” Fr. Denis said. In the lab, students gave Fr. Denis a cool reception. Fr. Emilian then delivered a one-hour presentation on the war and then led a discussion. When the boys grew restless after about an hour, the documentary film was shown.

The violent images on the screen left many of the jaded Americans with their mouths agape.

“The danger was palpable,” remembered **Steve McAuliff ’71**.

Then out of the darkness a slim figure approached the screen and pointed at one of the Hungarian students.

“That one, the one with the glasses,” remarked Fr. Denis, “this is your headmaster.” Silence, except for the noisy film projector that suddenly sounded more like machine-gun fire.

“It left an impression,” said **Jim Smith ’72**.

“You had to respect the fact that he was there in the middle of the action. Fr. Denis gained a lot of credibility that day,” McAuliff emphasized.

Still, the students weren’t about to share their newfound appreciation with Fr. Denis.

This was, after all, a generation that had definite problems with authority. The Vietnam War, the Kent State shootings (in which four student protesters were killed by national guardsmen in Ohio), and then Watergate would lead to a decade in which authority on virtually all levels was constantly questioned.

Cistercian’s first three classes also had another problem with Fr. Denis (and the rest of the second wave of Hungarian monks who were not present at the school’s founding).

VIETNAM PROTEST Upper School students give Fr. Denis a cool reception on October 15, 1969. Fr. Roch sits among the students in the middle of the photo. The third and fourth students from the left wear black arm bands. Fr. Emilian Novak (far left) will lead a discussion on the Vietnam War before a Time/Life documentary film on the 1956 Hungarian Revolution is shown.



Photo courtesy of the Cistercian Prep School Archive

March 2003

[The Haggertys] also must have surmised that the social graces Fr. Damian had enjoyed — fine dinners, trips to Fish Creek, and weekends in the Bahamas — would be wasted on Fr. Denis.

“The first generation of students felt entitled,” explained Fr. Bernard. They assumed the role of “the ‘owners’ of the school.” Anybody outside of the original circle of teachers “was an intruder who had to be taught ‘how we do things around here.’”

For them, Fr. Damian’s would be a hard act to follow.

OVERLOOKING THE CITY FROM ATOP THE Petroleum Club one summer evening in 1969, Pat and Bea Haggerty dined with Fr. Denis and discussed the young headmaster’s first major decision. Fr. Denis had decided to eliminate Pre-Form because he felt a nine-year program was too long while the school’s enrollment was too thin (too few students in each class). He also pointed out there was little accomplished in Pre-Form that was consequential for Form I. Besides, there was enough to do without the burden of testing and admitting a whole new class.

“Okay,” said Pat Haggerty, finally consenting to the plan as he pulled his car up to his house. “But take care with these kinds of decisions.”

As the school’s best-known benefactors, the Haggertys occupied a unique position at Cistercian, yet Fr. Denis was surprised that the Haggertys felt he needed their agreement for this kind of a decision.

On the other hand, it is very likely that the Haggertys were astonished at the self-assured decisiveness of their dinner companion. They also must have surmised that the social graces that Fr. Damian had enjoyed — fine dinners, trips to Fish Creek, and weekends in the Bahamas — would be wasted on Fr. Denis.

In September 1969, four dads also learned that Fr. Denis would yield little, if anything at all, to pressure.

By the looks on their faces, the delegation had come on a mission. Messrs. Coyle, O’Connor, Pritchett, and Sullivan strode into the headmaster’s office, took their seats, and brought up a subject of great import: high school football.

Everyone in the room was painfully aware that the talented coach Ron Taliaferro (who had put together Cistercian’s first varsity squad in the spring) had quit unexpectedly on August 1. Forced to scramble to find a replacement just a few days before practices were to begin, Fr. Denis had discovered a 21-year-old named Bill Coombes through a Dallas YMCA director. Now, a couple of games into the season, the dads had come to convey serious concerns about the new man’s inexperience. They proposed hiring a line coach. They were prepared to select the individual and pay him out of their own pockets.

“Look,” Fr. Denis said. “I have hired Coach Coombes and it is very clear to me that he should be in charge. You may be right that we need a line coach. But the school will pay his salary and Coach Coombes will hire him. It is crucial that the team have a united leadership.”

Three of the gentlemen begrudgingly expressed their support for the headmaster’s plan. Jake O’Connor stayed behind.

“You did the right thing,” he said. As he departed, he turned back and smiled, perhaps surprised at Fr. Denis’ firm backbone.

Fr. Denis leaned forward to check that the men had disappeared down the hall. Then he picked up the phone to ring Fr. Bernard.

“What’s a line coach?” he asked.

Glory days

Reeling through the annals of Cistercian's history on the pitch and the hardcourt

Ah, winter sports — the thrill of the big goal or the excitement of the last-minute shot. In soccer, the most memorable matches pitted Cistercian against traditional powers who were, on paper, supposed to win easily. In basketball, the most thrilling games we recall are the improbable, buzzer-beating comebacks. We'll start with soccer in honor of the school's Hungarian heritage.

Back in the '70-'71 season, Coach Pepe Dill led a Hawks team peppered with players from all four classes. In the second game of the season against Jesuit, the two teams had fought to a 1-1 halftime tie. After intermission, two freshmen took full advantage of the gusty wind at their backs. Winger **Joe Nicholson '74** took a pass from midfielder **Adrian Lorrain '74**, glided up to the left edge of the penalty area, and let go a shot. The looping ball from Nicholson's right foot was urged over the keeper's outstretched hands by the wind and smacked into the far upper corner of Jesuit's net. The Hawks held on for a 2-1 win.

In 1977, three freshmen starters were helping the Hawks cruise into the second half of the season with just one loss, to Jesuit. In their second game with the Rangers at Hagger Field, freshmen **Paul Tomaso '80** and Todd Saayer scored along with **Bruce Jilek '78** to help the Hawks pull out a 3-2 victory. The win put the icing on a 10-1-1 season.

The '88-'89 team rode the veteran leadership of eight senior starters to a spot in the Division I championship game against defending champion Greenhill. In a seesaw battle, the teams traded goals before the Hawks scored the game-winner to break Greenhill's streak of nine consecutive championships. This was Cistercian's only SPC Division I championship team.

At the 1993 SPC South Zone Tourney in Houston, the '92-'93 Hawks battled Episcopal Houston which was led by the two top offensive players in the SPC. Both teams entered the match undefeated in conference play. ESH dominated most of the rain-soaked game, but **James Tinker '94** was frustrating their best playmaker. Then, around the 85th minute, **Kyle Sommers '94** scored a miraculous goal on a shot (or was it a cross?). Coach Saied's Hawks ended

up in the SPC Division I Championship game that year, losing to Holland Hall, 1-0.

It's hard to beat basketball for last-minute, hair-raising excitement. The following games qualify in that regard.

Things looked virtually hopeless with 10 seconds to go in a '87-'88 contest against ESD at Cistercian. The Eagles, boasting a front line of players 6'10", 6'5", and 6'3", had the Hawks down by three points. ESD had the ball but turned it over on an over-and-back violation. **Matt Hawkins '88** promptly drilled a three-pointer to tie the ball game. The Hawks pressed and prevented ESD from inbounding the ball within the required five seconds. Hawks ball. Hawkins inbounded the ball to **Kent Wallace '89** who drained his 17-

footer for a stunning victory. The ecstatic Cistercian fans erupted and rushed the floor.

Our second buzzer-beater took place in the loud, hostile confines of the Trinity Valley gym early in February 2001. The Hawks fought from behind the entire night, unable to match the Trojans' three-point shooting prowess. When **David Aird '01** fouled out with four minutes remaining and the Hawks in an eight-point hole, things looked desperate.

But, led by **Michael West '02**, who made 12 of 12 free throws in the fourth quarter, the Hawks drew to a tie with 4 seconds left. Point guard **Spencer Bethmann '03** took the inbounds pass at the far end of the court, dribbled once, then whipped a long pass to **Matt Truitt '03** who was standing just outside the three-point arc in the left corner. Truitt let it fly. When the ball splashed through the net, the Trinity Valley fans

fell silent, watching in disbelief as the Hawks made a dog pile celebrating their win, Hawks 61, Trojans 58.

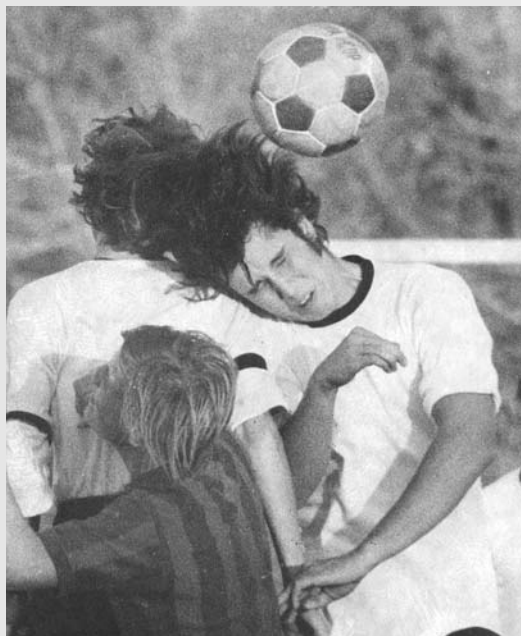


Photo courtesy of the Cistercian Prep School Archive

HARD HEADS, HARD COURT Joe Pat Martin '73 (above) and a teammate go for a header in this 1971 match. The 1980 tip-off below features (clockwise from top) Dean Henigsmen '80, Michael Donohoe '80, Kevin Glasheen '80, Ed Johnson '80, and Paul Cummings '80.

Photo courtesy of the Cistercian Prep School Archive



THIRTY-THREE IS IN OUR RELIGION the right age for being crucified,” Fr. Denis said, divulging his age to new English teacher Stephen Housewright on a walk from the abbey to the school in 1969. The comparison to Christ’s age made light of the headmaster’s battered state. But the burden of the transition, of replacing the beloved Fr. Damian, of fighting so many battles, and of taking on such an immense task, weighed heavily on Fr. Denis.

“He often looked like a man who had been banished to the prairie,” said Jim Smith, “like a man who had been sentenced to some punishment he didn’t understand.”

“There was never any question about my call to obedience,” Fr. Denis recalled. “Dreams and plans don’t matter. The community’s need is the most important thing and that’s what your superior tells you.”

Fr. Denis’ dreams had been trampled on more than once before. When, as an 18-year-old he applied to study French literature at the university in Hungary, the communist regime enrolled him in law school. When, as a 26-year-old he sought to pursue a French degree in order to teach it at the prep school, Abbot Anselm suggested he earn a master’s degree in mathematics.

Each time, he poured himself into the task at hand (e.g., it took him just two years to complete a bachelor’s and a master’s in math at TCU).

As headmaster, moments of serenity were few.

“I passed Fr. Denis’ office late one afternoon during the final exam period of the fall semester of 1969 and heard the *Dies Irae* from Mozart’s *Requiem* on his stereo,” remembered Housewright.

“I always play that when I grade papers,” he smiled.

He fought through the tension and the long days of work (usually from 7:30 in the morning to 10:30 at night), giving everything to the job. “He would have made a tremendous Marine,” Tom Martin reflected. “He has a great sense of duty.”

During that first year, he tackled a long list of urgent objectives. A billing system was implemented to improve the school’s ability to collect tuitions. Admissions testing was modified and streamlined, placing the emphasis on achievement rather than IQ. (The individually administered IQ tests had taken one hour per applicant; the new method took one-half hour for an entire group of applicants.) Rules for hiring and firing were established. Due process was integrated into the disciplinary procedures. The curriculum was modified and formalized. A new practice field (the Upper Field now being moved to make way for the new gym) was added for football and soccer.

As college counselor, Fr. Denis traveled frequently to introduce the school to college admissions officers around the country and to dispel the perception that Cistercian was a “white flight” school.

As Form Master of Form IV (Class ’74), Fr. Denis struggled with that group’s most tempestuous year.

To boost the school’s image in mathematics, he put the top math students from Forms VII and VIII in one classroom and taught them simultaneously (alternately teaching one group

while the other worked on problems). Fr. Denis taught the four Form VIII students calculus. (“I breezed through first year calculus at Rice University due to my superb instruction from Fr. Denis,” said **Tim Johnson ’70**.)

But the accomplishments didn’t alter the emotions of those in the Class of ’70. Their resentment over Fr. Damian’s resignation cut too deeply. At Cistercian’s first graduation, Fr. Damian and Fr. Denis sat on either side of Abbot Anselm on the makeshift stage in the lunchroom. In one speech, master of ceremonies Monte Atkinson spoke passionately of Fr. Damian’s vision for the school. In another, valedictorian Tom Martin saluted Fr. Denis’s contributions to Cistercian. The emotional undercurrent took a toll on everyone.

For many in the Class of ’70, decades would pass before their feelings for the school were mended.

For Fr. Denis, the strain bubbled up in another form. Hours after attending a year-end school board meeting the day after graduation, he lay in a hospital bed at St. Paul Hospital, exhausted and suffering from kidney stones.

The new gym stoked tensions behind the scenes at the abbey where one group of monks believed UD to be the community’s most important project and the other believed the prep school should take precedence.

ATOP THE FIRST HOMESPUN edition of *The Informer* in March 1971, the headline screamed, “Construction on gym to begin next month.” With the gym on the horizon, a new optimism permeated the school. Students, faculty, and parents began to feel that Cistercian was finally coming into its own. The future looked bright.

But the new gym — to which the monastery contributed \$200,000 of the \$750,000 price tag — stoked tensions behind the scenes at the abbey where one group of monks believed UD to be the community’s most important project and the other believed the prep school should take precedence.

“Some Cistercians felt that with our language and cultural barriers we were totally incapable of handling American kids,” Fr. Roch said of the priests who believed the university should rank as the abbey’s top priority. “Some, having just finished their doctoral dissertation felt that teaching in a secondary school was below their level of education.” Many Cistercians made excellent college professors. And monks like Fr. David Balas, who occasionally taught at the school, clearly belonged at the college and graduate level.

On the other side were the priests who believed the community should teach secondary school just as Cistercians had done for centuries in Europe. Among these, Fr. Denis led the charge. He had argued strongly that a gym was crucial for the survival of the prep school. Abbot Anselm agreed.

Now the monastery’s large donation to the gym would put both Abbot Anselm and Fr. Denis on the hot seat.

The explosive atmosphere was fueled partly by two Vatican II pronouncements that were enacted in the early seventies. One of these new regulations changed the monastery’s financial outlook.

Since coming to America in the fifties, Abbot Anselm had offered the services of Cistercian monks to pastors around the country. The Cistercians would say special masses, primarily for those whose loved ones had passed away. When the number of requests for such masses increased, Abbot Anselm enlisted the

help of the well-stocked Cistercian monasteries in Europe (including the dispersed monks of Hungary). He sent one-half of each donation to Europe for fulfilling the request.

In the fifties, the typical donation for such a mass was 50 cents. By the sixties, one dollar became customary. Through hundreds of thousands of these small transactions, Abbot Anselm generated the money to fund the construction of the monastery's three wings, and to contribute very significantly to the construction of the Middle School, the Upper School, and the gym.

Vatican II, however, prohibited the sharing of donations, putting a stop to the monastery's practice and slowing the flow of funds to a trickle. It should be noted that in those days, eight to ten priests taught at the prep school for virtually nothing. The same held true at the University of Dallas where Cistercians (along with the other religious faculty) were paid a pittance compared to the lay faculty.

Vatican II also dictated that each religious community review its constitution. In light of the old debate over the community's direction, the new financial dilemma, and the recent donation to the school, the constitutional debate soon centered on one clause: the lifetime term of the abbot.

These issues prompted the community in 1973 to vote on the direction of the abbey. The monks considered three options: to devote themselves to the prep school, to devote themselves to the university, or to build a parish and engage in pastoral work. None of the three options had to be exclusive. The prep school emerged from this vote as the community's first priority, but it was far from unanimous. In accordance with that vote, Fr. James and Fr. Robert (the monastery's newest members since Fr. Bernard), were sent to the prep school to teach and become Form Masters. It soon became clear that both were better suited for the University of Dallas. This misfire helped perpetuate the debate over whether the prep school should remain the monastery's primary project.

SOMETIME DURING THE 1971-72 SCHOOL year, a new Cistercian began to emerge. Except for the senior class, Fr. Damian had not nurtured these Cistercian students. As a result, they felt neither resentment nor a sense of betrayal over his resignation. But they had problems all the same.

"Cistercian Syndrome," a story that appeared anonymously in the January 1972 edition of *The Informer*, described one of these. In it, the author (whose identity we can now reveal as **Robert Salgo '73**) confessed that in his first few years at Cistercian, he did not fit in because he refused to "submit to the ideal behavior set up by the Cistercian elite." Ostracized, he began "to doubt [his] personal value."

Salgo told how he slowly "became part of the family." He wondered why. Had he changed or had the standards been lowered?

"That's the game I still play," he wrote. "I am involved with myself trying to reestablish my personal worth as a human being in relation to other people."

Every adolescent faces this dilemma to one degree or another. Cistercian students in those days, however, faced a double dose of insecurity since they were attending a new school in the boonies with a strange name few could pronounce. The school's reputation was misrepresented almost as often as its name was mispronounced. ("I met a girl who thought Cistercian was for kids with special needs," **George Susat '74** recalled.)

Salgo determined that he would tackle his problem head-on, without the help of a parent, teacher, or administrator.

"A close look at my problem and its ramifications is in order; and through the writing of this confession, this has been fulfilled," he concluded. "I am stable."

The story sparked a great deal of discussion at the school. Some believed it to be an indictment of Cistercian.

"I think the same could have been written about any private school," Salgo reflected recently. "I wanted to write about breaking out of that mold of 'What do others think of me?' that can be so difficult when you're an adolescent."

Cistercian syndrome quickly became a buzzword for the school's inferiority complex, what some perceived as a loser's attitude, especially in sports.

"Right now," suggested sports columnist **Peter Smith '74** in the March 1972 edition of *The Informer*, "the most provocative question on everyone's mind is: Can the new [gym] cure the losing tradition at Cistercian?" Perhaps, he wrote, "but what about the Cistercian syndrome?"

Coaches Bob Patrizi, Bill Coombes, and Bob Haaser replied via a letter to the editor in April, "The Cistercian syndrome is a bunch of horsie-stuff. Gymnasiums don't come equipped with traditions. People make traditions."

In fact, traditions already were popping up all around the school. *The Informer* itself became a tradition; and its frequent literary and artistic contributions spawned the school's literary

Vow and Vision

By Dr. Tom Pruitt

IN THE OLD PHOTOGRAPH, curled and stiff with age,
An austere figure stands half in darkness, peering
Through black and white toward something beyond,
Toward a sight unseen perhaps by any other, visible
Only to the mind's eye of that one so still and solemn,
Caught, we might imagine, in an act of contemplation.
He appears to hold his vision with a fierce tenacity,
Pushing aside any other that collides with his own,
In the sure confidence that his will most endure.

There is in that figure more roundness now;
The angular leanness has melted into pliancy,
Into hair close-cropped and skin fitted more loosely
Over a face more given to fits of laughter;
Only in the lucid penetration of the eyes
Does the old, transfixing fire remain unchecked,
Kindled there, then carried through a voice
That cleaves the air with brutal power should any
Threaten the comprehensive order he has nurtured.

In his mind's eye he guards the vision, holds it steady,
Silently sustaining a stability in which all else flourishes,
A vow made incarnate in brick and stone, in church and school
Amidst a rolling landscape of mesquite and scrub oak,
Under the shadowy loomings of skyscraper and restless distraction—
The vision, jealously protected, continues to provide,
Beneath the Virgin's gentle eye and outstretched arms,
An enduring shape to the life we live in this place
And through which we prosper and grow into ourselves.

— from *Familiar Portals*

magazine, *Reflections*, a year later. The student government established off-campus lunch privileges. Then sparked by a couple of letters to the editor in *The Informer*, the student body elected its first set of cheerleaders in the spring of '72. (Matney Faulkner, aunt of **Alec Kemp '03** and **Patrick Kemp '10**, served as Head Cheerleader that first year.)

By the next fall, in front of their cheerleaders and brand new bleachers, a winning football tradition was forged when the Hawks won a hard-fought 24-20 victory over powerful Dallas Christian, a team they had never defeated. The school seemed to be throwing the monkey off its back. Spirits reached an all-time high.

Afterwards, however, **Gary Lucido '73** issued a warning in the October 1972 edition of *The Informer* in a story with the headline, "Marching Band for CPS."

He suggested that "the sudden and almost unbelievable appearance of a wire fence around our [football] field" was an abomination. "The team is made totally inaccessible to those who come to support them. It is already a step in the wrong direction."

"I [am] proud of being a Cistercian student. I'd like to continue to be proud," he wrote. "I don't want to see Cistercian transformed into a disgustingly typical high school."

What an about-face. In a matter of just a few years, the complaining and blaming had subsided. Lucido's manifesto declared there was some innate value in Cistercian's quirkiness. The message was loud and clear — many of the school's differences were worth preserving for future generations of Cistercian students. (The atmosphere at Cistercian football games continues to be uniquely informal, thanks in no small part to Lucido's vigilance.)

IN RETROSPECT, IT IS FITTING THAT THE CLASS of '73 led this pivotal change in the school's psyche. This was the group of boys who had spent the first half of Pre-Form on Walnut Hill Lane and the second half in Irving. Rooted in the school's past, this class would produce Cistercian's fourth headmaster, one who would lead the institution into the 21st century.

"The Class of '73 included some top minds," recalled Abbot Denis. "I was also there for those who had difficulties, and they appreciated that. Many in the Class of '73 and the whole of the Class of '74 gave so much support for the new directions of the school. That is how we turned the corner."

Even the student government developed an easy relationship with the headmaster.

"I remember after the election being concerned about my ability to work with [Fr. Denis] as headmaster," said **Tom Lewis '73** who became the fourth president of the student government. "We met one-on-one soon thereafter and then I began to understand why the guys in the Class of '74 were so fond of this 'tough guy.' He was respectful of my new position and encouraged me to lead in a manner that was responsive to my fellow students and responsible to the school."

"Much to my amazement," Lewis remarked, "he challenged me to push for more student responsibilities and freedoms. As a

result, the administration and student government became partners and a number of changes were made to uniforms, the student lounge, off-campus lunch privileges, a spring concert, Earth Day activities, week-end socials, intramural sports, and a variety of student initiatives."

"And perhaps most importantly, a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect between students and 'the establishment' evolved from what had been combative lows in the late sixties and early seventies."

"On a personal level," Lewis added, "I learned that what I had previously seen as tough was actually tough love and much more love than tough."

""I [am] proud of being a Cistercian student. I'd like to continue to be proud. I don't want to see Cistercian transformed into a disgustingly typical high school."

— Gary Lucido '73
The Informer, Oct. 1972

"OKAY, WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED something," Fr. Denis remembered feeling in 1974. "Now when we sell our students and our school, we can say, 'This is our product.'"

An outstanding faculty shaped this product. All the holes of the sixties had been systematically plugged and few weaknesses remained.

The English department, which had suffered from turnover and a lack of leadership for six years, began to establish itself upon the arrival of Stephen Housewright.

"Things began to fall into place, and the counsel, good example, and firm leadership of Fr. Denis had a lot to do with it," Housewright remembered. "We all got busy, both faculty and students, putting our energy into teaching and learning and leaving personality conflicts and 'political' turmoil behind."

"And work we did," Housewright insisted. "Above all, that is what I remember.

"I think I was the kind of teacher good students love to hate — at least I hope I was," he said. "But as hard as I drove them, I drove myself even harder, and most of them could see that."

The disciplinary problems of the early years were tamed one way or the other.

"One day I begged Fr. Denis, 'Please sit in my classes so I could be able to teach something,'" remembered Fr. Roch. "'Alone I am unable to control the class; they shout and yell and misbehave and I am reduced to nothing.'"

"If I were to do that," Fr. Denis replied, "it would take away even your remaining authority. You have to fight it out alone."

"So I resigned myself to the impossible," remembered Fr. Roch, "and gradually the situation changed."

John Daugherty '79 recalled "Mr. Hall staring at, and talking to, the top left corner of the classroom, especially when he was angry. Mr. Parks scaring the hell out of us, walking around the classroom tapping his meter stick on his boot, and hearing the smallest whisper from the other side of the classroom. Mr. Housewright teaching us literary criticism as if our verbal score on the SAT really mattered." Then there were the priests, including "Fr. Thomas, so willing to share stories of his experiences in occupied Hungary in addition to teaching Geography. And Fr. Melchior, with recitation in Form II, nailing us with chalk from across the room if he caught us drifting.

"I am sure I am missing a few," Daugherty added, "but the

point is that this was a collection of very different, very unique personalities [and] masterful educators. When we graduated from Cistercian, we knew how to think, and we were never intimidated by what we did not understand; we could think our way through any problems.”

IN FIVE YEARS AT THE PREP SCHOOL, Fr. Denis had overcome great obstacles to put the school on a winning track. His relentless efforts to pursue the lofty standards of the founders had won him support from parents, students, and faculty. But in February 1974, just as the school was “turning the corner,” he ran into a brick wall at the monastery.

In a spectacular run-off election, the monks voted to block Fr. Denis from a position on the Abbot’s Council, the body that serves as the board of directors for the monastery. Fr. Denis was convinced that his effectiveness at the school would be undercut severely if he were unable to influence decisions at the highest levels of the monastery. So he asked Abbot Anselm to appoint him to an *ex officio* position on the Council.

“I want you to be the headmaster,” the abbot said, “but I will not appoint you to the Abbot’s Council because it would contradict the community’s wishes.” The abbot knew his own power base was disintegrating; such a move would have further jeopardized his ability to lead.

The vote dramatized the unhappiness that a sizable group in the community felt with events since the vote in 1973. While the school had its new gym, the monks were still saying mass in a suffocating room that had served as their “temporary” chapel for almost twenty years. Since the proposal to become a parish had been voted down in 1973, there appeared little hope that the monks would ever build a church. Their “temporary” chapel was looking more and more like their permanent church home. This dismal facility would not help attract young men interested in a priestly vocation.

Some monks apparently also felt that the school and Fr. Denis had become too powerful within the abbey.

“I interpreted the move as an attempt to force me either to resign or to serve as a lame-duck headmaster,” Abbot Denis remembered.

Fr. Denis resigned. Some in the abbey termed his departure a sabbatical, but no return was scheduled.

Abbot Anselm appointed Fr. Henry Marton to serve as Headmaster, but Fr. Henry accepted the position for only a year. He would be helped — and a certain

amount of continuity provided — by his brother, Fr. Bernard Marton, who continued to serve as assistant headmaster as he had since 1971.

“What would you like to do next year?” Abbot Anselm asked his 38-year-old ex-headmaster.

“What I asked you before my ordination in 1961,” Fr. Denis answered, “to study the Bible in Rome.”

Fr. Denis made arrangements to pursue his passion for Biblical study in a city he had grown to love as a student for the priesthood. He would seek a degree from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.

Like the abbot, long-time board members Bryan Smith and Pat Haggerty felt such an endeavor would benefit Fr. Denis and in the long run, the abbey and the school.

“Haggerty and I agreed that the Pontifical Biblical Institute would be the kind of challenging intellectual environment that might soften his personality a little,” Smith said. “We were anxious for him to become easier to work with.”

“This was important not just for the school in the short-term. The long-term survival of the abbey and the school depended on who would succeed Anselm as abbot,” Smith insisted. “If Denis was to be in the running, he needed better inter-personal skills.”

Piecing together events years later

“What’s Fr. Denis busting me for now?” wondered **Mark Talkington ’79** when he was called out of class in the spring of his senior year. As he arrived at the Headmaster’s Office, Fr. Denis was holding the phone smiling.

“Harvard is on the line,” Fr. Denis said.

The talented soccer player had applied to Columbia, Harvard, and Stanford. He had been accepted at all three but did not have a clue how he was going to pay the tuition. Then Stanford offered a package that included a full-ride plus a partial athletic scholarship.

“I was sure that Fr. Denis had used his influence with Stanford’s admissions office to create a financial aid package for me,” he said.

Now here was a Harvard admissions officer offering Talkington a financial package that matched Stanford’s package along with a little sales pitch.

“I was overwhelmed,” he said. “So Fr. Denis calmly grabbed the phone and politely told Harvard that I would respond soon.”

“The next day,” Talkington remembered, “I received a call from Columbia at home and they offered me a package.”

“It never occurred to me for several years as to why Harvard just happened to have called Fr. Denis during the school day. He never mentioned his involvement and let me go off thinking that I had accomplished everything on my own. After a few years of piecing the events together, I concluded that Fr. Denis was responsible for obtaining the scholarships and financial aid for me so that I could attend the school of my choice.”

“Like so many of the priests at Cistercian,” Talkington added. “Fr. Denis is humble and unselfish, a man who measures himself on the success and growth of the boys and men he has taught and guided. Thanks Fr. Denis.”



FORCEFUL PRESENCE Whether teaching, college counseling, or administering, Fr. Denis’ dedication to the school and its boys always came through.

THE BEAUTY OF LIFE IN ROME AND THE challenges of the Pontifical Biblical Institute provided a welcome change of pace for the newly “retired” Fr. Denis. And through the end of 1974, things in Irving were running smoothly without him.

“I never had any wish to leave behind the prep school,” Fr. Denis reflected. “But if my superior had said, ‘Everything is going well and there is peace at the school,’ then I would have said, ‘Okay, give me another job.’ I would not have resented it.”

He also could have stayed in Rome and followed his love and substantial talents for Biblical study.

But a letter from Fr. Julius early in 1975 carried some surprising news. The abbot general, who arrived at the monastery at the end of January to hold one of his regular canonical visitations, had found the monastery in upheaval.

The abbot general decided to call for a vote of confidence, to determine whether the abbot — who was holding office for life, in accordance with the old constitution — had sufficient support to continue. The abbot did not receive the required majority. After having led the community for nearly 30 years, Fr. Anselm would have to content himself for the time being by speculating how the community might reinvent itself. In two emotional stabs at authority (a recurring theme in America during the seventies), the monks had managed to depose their two most capable leaders in the matter of a year. They would now be free to sink or swim without them.

The abbot general returned to Irving in April to conduct an election for an administrator to lead the abbey during a one-year cooling-off period. Fr. Christopher won that thankless job of trying to hold the community together until the following April when an abbot would once again be elected.

The problems, however, were not confined to the abbey. Fr. Julius also wrote of problems arising at the prep school.

“There were rumblings, especially among the lay faculty,” remembered Fr. Bernard, “some of whom wanted to take advantage while Fr. Denis was gone.” In fact, some lay teachers sensed the power vacuum and attempted to fill it. Others submitted proposals to transform the school, from the curriculum, discipline, and admissions to hiring, firing, and benefits.

At the same time, suffering from the effects of the oil crisis of 1973-75, the school was losing money. By May, Fr. Christopher realized he could no longer allow the problems at the school to continue.

“Would you consider returning to run the school in the fall?” he asked in a letter that found Fr. Denis in Jerusalem.

“Of course,” Fr. Denis replied excitedly, “But I need to come back immediately. I want to catch everyone before the school year closes. Otherwise I cannot begin to organize things for next year.”

Within a week, Fr. Denis had arrived back in Dallas. Once again, he found the school reeling and in debt. But this time, things would be different.

UPON HIS RETURN IN MAY 1975, Fr. Denis sensed a fresh new appreciation for the talents he brought to the job of headmaster. “I learned that people were alarmed by the confusion at the school while I was away,” he said. For the first time, he felt needed and supported both by the school community and by his brothers in the abbey.

“Now,” he thought, “I know this is my calling.” It was a brand new feeling for Fr. Denis. And he had a surprise for them.

“When Fr. Denis came back,” recalled Bryan Smith, “he was not passive or submissive by any means, but he was more toler-

ant. He was willing to talk to people.”

He undertook the challenges of the headmaster’s office with a new optimism and fervor. The year away seemed to have done everyone a lot of good.

By the next spring, Fr. Anselm was re-elected abbot and two novices, **Br. Peter Verhalen '73** and Br. Gregory Schweers, had joined the monastery. Many of the complex issues of the monastery remained unsolved, but the community recognized that it was time to move forward. They also realized that, although far from perfect, Abbot Anselm and Fr. Denis were leaders who were working for the common good. Good news also arrived from UD.

In 1975, Bryan Smith had been named Chancellor of the university. In the course of a comprehensive salary review the next year, Smith saw “terrible inequities in the way the salaries were structured.” The Dominicans, Cistercians, and nuns were being paid “peanuts.” He increased the salaries of the religious, bringing their compensation levels close to that of the lay faculty.

WHEN JANE BRET FIRST PROPOSED that the Cistercians lead a new prep school in 1960, a whirlwind of thoughts must have swirled through Prior Anselm’s head. But his placid exterior probably disguised both his trepidations and his excitement.

On the one hand, a prep school would distract the Cistercians from the very purpose for which they had settled in Dallas — to teach at the University of Dallas. This community of highly educated monks had come to take pride in their roles as college professors. They might not be inclined to give it up for a prep school.

On the other hand, Prior Anselm felt employment at the University of Dallas could be not guaranteed forever. Operated under the community’s control, a prep school would provide the monks with a more reliable source of employment. And importantly, secondary education had been the Cistercians’ traditional vocation in Europe for centuries.

Ultimately, Prior Anselm’s decision to proceed with the prep school project reflected his deep sense of responsibility for the community’s financial stability and its historic purpose. He was prepared to weather the inevitable difficulties within the monastery because he believed that in the long-term, the monks needed the prep school as much as the prep school needed the monks.

It is remarkable that in the midst of trying to resolve their complex issues in the seventies, the monks never shared their burdens and continued to bestow gifts upon the prep school. The priests contributed their services, as they had since 1962, taking virtually nothing in return. These donations freed up funds that would be used to attract and build a talented lay faculty. The monks also contributed significantly to all of the early building projects, including the \$200,000 gift to the building of the gym in 1971.

The monks offered gifts of even greater value, however. As teachers, form masters, and administrators, each gave a shining example of obedience, self-sacrifice, love, humility, and dedication. The significance of many of these gifts would become clear to most Cistercian students only years, sometimes decades, after graduation (see sidebar on the opposite page).

In the end, the difficulties of the seventies helped forge a solid enterprise — one capable of great stability — by defining lines of authority and seasoning a number of important leaders, including Fr. Denis, Fr. Bernard, and Fr. Peter.

The stage was now set for a new era, one of enrollments increased, facilities built, reputations spread, and debts repaid.

Before long, the school with the difficult name would be hard to forget.

“WHY ARE PEOPLE SENDING YOU money?” Pat Miga asked her son Matt around Christmas 1998. She had tried to remain calm after the first few checks arrived in October, but she could no longer contain her curiosity. **Matt Miga '03**, then a Form IV student, had divulged information to her on only a “need-to-know basis.”

“Mom, I’ve started this web site that advertisers are interested in,” explained Matt, an understated, independent sort who his mother described as “14 going on 41” at the time. “Advertising agencies are paying me to put banner ads on my web site. By the way Mom, I need to open a checking account.”

Ever since learning to design web sites when he was in Form II, Matt had spent a lot of time on the computer.

“I saw potential in designing web sites,” Miga said. Soon his love for music gave his abilities some direction. The MP3 file format — the format that most efficiently stores music — was just beginning to find favor among computer/music lovers. Matt began looking for hardware to play MP3s. He found there wasn’t much information on this subject on the World Wide Web.

So he developed a site called acid-sounds.com where he reviewed the array of software designed to create, store, and play MP3s. It didn’t stop with MP3s either. Miga covered any software that served one’s audio needs. In the process, he struck up an e-relationship with a Canadian programmer who helped Miga improve his site.

The Canadian partnered with Miga on a second site called acid-search.com that was designed to search servers for specific song titles in MP3 format. The site’s popularity grew steadily. Naturally, media planners at advertising agencies took note and called to inquire about advertising rates.

“I would receive these phone calls for Matt during the day,” dad Dennis Miga remembered. “I was inclined to tell them that he was at school, but then I would catch myself and just say, ‘Uh, he’s not here right now.’”

“At first, I was reluctant to accept advertising,” Miga remembered, “But as the site grew, so did the expenses. Before long, I was contacting them about advertising.”

The site soon required an entire dedicated server to handle the volume of visitors, and then another. Overhead began running over \$1,000 a month for the servers and for compensating the Canadian programmer for his services. Mr. Miga helped look over his son’s informal contract with his partner, whom he never met face to face. It was similar to the way he occasional-

ly looked over a homework assignment and suggested slight improvements.

Advertisers like Sony, MuchMusic TV, and other world wide advertising giants began appearing on the site, helping Miga to cover his overhead and generate a tidy profit.

In the spring of 1999, a 19-year-old named Shawn Fanning incorporated Napster. By August, Miga had seen how Fanning’s program allowed users to access and share a million databases containing MP3s, not just the 200 or so that were accessed by acidsearch.com.

In November 1999, the number of visitors to acidsearch.com peaked at about 11,000 unique site visitors per day. This volume placed Miga’s site in the top one percent of web sites on the Internet, but Miga knew it was time to quit.

“I threw in the towel,” Miga remembered. “I knew that once the decline started, it was only a matter of time before everyone would jump to Napster.”

So Miga sold the exclusive advertising rights to acidsearch.com to an agency called eFront.com. “He has saved most of the money he made,” his mother said.

Miga immediately jumped to another project that he found as a result of having struck up another e-relationship, this time with the people associated with Michael Ovitz (the Creative Arts Agency founder and former Disney president). The venture, called Dimension Music, operated an on-line music community called dmusic.com that offers a way for new bands to be heard. Miga wrote a column on digital audio software news.

“I guess I am a writer by nature,” Miga said. “I seem to have a sense of what kind of information people

are looking for.” Miga earned a monthly paycheck for his services.

In 2001, events conspired to urge Miga into a more conventional lifestyle for a Cistercian Upper Schooler. “I had contemplated leaving when the Internet bubble burst,” he said. “The funding for the site dried up and I was getting tired of all the work.”

But the business experience has left him prepared for the next opportunity. He will attend New York University in order to stay close to events as they unfold.

“The experience has been very constructive,” Dennis Miga suggested. “Matt’s proven to be a very honest, very ethical business person who is concerned about the ramifications of his actions on others.”

“I liked running the business,” Miga said of his entrepreneurial days. “I enjoyed creating the site and having people read my work. I don’t believe I’ve run my last Web site.”



Photo by Jim Reisch

14 going on 41

An Internet entrepreneur at 14, Matt Miga '03 is now ready and waiting for the next opportunity.

By David Stewart '74



Photo by Michael Giordano '03

ALL-SPC shooting guard Matt Truitt '03 scored the game-winner against TMI.

Victory over EHS highlights season

The memorable wins of the '02-'03 campaign will stick with the Hawks long after the disappointments of a 17-17 season fade.

"We weren't as consistent as we would have liked," said Danny Lee, head coach. "But we had some real high points."

One came in December when the Hawks battled St. Mark's in the finals of the Private School Classic. The Hawks fought the number-two-ranked Lions all the way before succumbing, 67-61.

Spencer Bethman '03 led the team in assists with 10.2 and **Eric Ojeda '05** led the team in rebounds and scoring (13.2 points per game).

Matt Truitt '03, who earned All-SPC

honors at shooting guard, scored 12.1 point per game (including the game winner against TMI). **Peter McCormack '03** scored an average of 11.5 points per game. That included a phenomenal performance against Home School in which he was true on six of six three-pointers.

Along the way, the Hawks won both games against Greenhill (61-48 and 61-51), but the most significant victory came against Houston Episcopal.

In the team's best performance of the year, the Hawks rang up 25 points in the first quarter, sparked by Bethman's assists and McCormack's 8 points. Ojeda finished with a strong double-double (20 points and 16 rebounds) in the 72-46 victory.

Hawks overcome injuries, fall just short of SPC finale

It was billed as a golden season for soccer at Cistercian, and with 60 out for soccer this year — led by 16 seniors — it certainly qualifies. If not for a couple of untimely injuries in the SPC tournament, the Hawks might have gone all the way.

Regardless, the Hawks ripped off a 13-5-1 season, earning a ranking amongst the area's top private school teams.

Coach Rob Kowalski reveled in the team's cohesiveness.

"We didn't have to find our identity this year," Kowalski said. "We only had to replace one starter so the chemistry was there from the beginning. That helped us to be more offensive-minded."

With veteran **Chris Sakowski '03** and newcomer **Seth Henderson '03** attacking, the Hawks scored early and often, netting 3.66 goals per game.

The defense was solid with senior stalwarts at each key position. Goalkeeper **Alex Gette '03** (All-SPC), sweeper **Will Harris '03**, center mid **Ian Cary '03** (All-SPC), and center mid **Jeff Judge '03** led a defense that allowed under a goal per game (0.99).

As expected the Hawks earned some impressive victories, including wins over St. Mark's, St. Stephens, and Oakridge (in the first round of the SPC tournament).

The win over Oakridge proved to be a turning point of sorts. Although the

Hawks pulled out a tough 1-0 victory over a top team, Sakowski (rolled ankle) and defender **Frank Abene '04** (hyperextended knee) were lost for the remainder of the tournament. In addition, **Sam Bowler '06** received a red card and was declared ineligible for the next game against St. Stephens.

The Hawks still nearly prevailed against St. Stephens in the next round, losing on a goal in the last minute of play. "They were just troopers," Kowalski said. "They laced up their boots and went to work."

Now the hard part — trying to fill the boots of those departing seniors.



Photo by Michael Giordano '03

WINGING IT Michael Tinker '03 takes it up the left side for the Hawks against Episcopal School of Dallas in a 2-0 victory.

CISTERCIAN CALENDAR

March

- 17 Spring Break begins
- 24 Classes resume

April

- 5-6 Upper School drama
- 9 Abbot's Circle Dinner
- 21 Booster Club/Alumni
Golf Tournament
- 27 New Parent Coffee

May

- 17 Commencement
- 31 Reunions Weekend

Address corrections

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The new www.cistercian.org

The new and improved Cistercian Web site makes its debut this month. Designer Cambria Reinsborough has increased its functionality and plans to update the site weekly to make it a reliable source for current information. Visit it soon!

On Prayer

Who is the greatest?

The disciples seem to be obsessed with the question, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Even a few hours before the arrest of Jesus, this is their foremost concern (Lk 22:24-27). That they are so pathetically human is very comforting for those of us who are plagued by the same temptations.

Our own society is equally obsessed with becoming great: wherever we are employed, we want to be number one or at least higher up than the guy next to us. The more insecure a person is the more he postures to prove his greatness.

Jesus does not disapprove of the ambition to become great. As St. Bernard points out, Jesus knows that we are created for greatness and excellence. Since we resemble God, our striving for greatness is part of human nature. But Jesus wants us to pursue a greatness that is real and attainable.

Jesus explains time and again to his disciples that he who wants to be the greatest should be the least among them (Lk 9:48). The leader should become the servant just as Christ came not to be served but to serve. He is among them as the one who serves (Lk 22:27).

To be the least or the smallest means also "to turn and become like little children" (Mt 18:1-5).

What should we imitate in a child? Obviously, not his self-centeredness, temper tantrums, moodiness, immaturity, or lack

of judgment. But even the most selfish child knows that he cannot survive on his own. He depends on his parents for everything. As the child depends on his parents, the adult "child" in the Kingdom wants to depend on his heavenly Father. He wants to receive from God's hands all that God is giving him because he knows that his Father is good. Just as the child trusts his parents, the adult Christian trusts God unconditionally; not second guessing God, not afraid that God will take advantage of his trust.

This attitude has nothing to do with infantilism. On the contrary, trust in God requires courage. No matter how dangerous my path, how uncertain the outcome, my trust in God becomes a source of strength for me. As long as I am doing God's will, I know that I am doing something important and great, even if in people's eyes my work looks insignificant.

If I am placed in a position of responsibility, decision-making and risky leadership, I should try even more to remain obedient to God. This obedience gives me the ability to make bold decisions; I have nothing to fear. The worst that could happen to me is failure. But even then, if I have been seeking only God's will, my peace should remain undisturbed. The motto of Blessed Pope John XXIII was "obedience and peace." As he was preparing for the greatest and riskiest religious event of the 20th century, the Second Vatican Council, Pope John kept his serenity and peace. What could shatter the one who desires only one thing, the will of God?

— Fr. Roch Kereszty