

CISTERCIAN CALENDAR

August

- 16** Used Book/Uniform Sale
- 19** New Parent/Student Orientation
- 20** Opening Ceremonies (noon dismissal)

September

- 1** Labor Day (no classes)

October

- 1** Open House
- 24** Homecoming

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Review of Familiar Portals

Pruit celebrates the places and people of Cistercian

By Glenn C. Arbery

The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture

It is hard to imagine a finer gift to the Cistercian community, both Abbey and School, than Dr. Thomas Pruitt's *Familiar Portals*, published earlier this year. So particularly does it celebrate the actual places and people of Cistercian that by reading these poems, a stranger should be able to navigate the hallways, find the Abbey Church by the contours of the sidewalk leading to it, and pick out individual monks from their characteristic expressions.

What comes across powerfully in poem after poem is the life of this very American and contemporary school, organized on the old European model and given its tone by the constant ironic humor, the devotion, and the Eucharistic peace of the displaced Hungarians at the center of its life.

But what makes the book more important is its record of the depths and sufferings of any real community. In these pages, Tom Pruitt addresses some of the most difficult emotions. A photograph of the late Fr. Damian in his workshop serves as the cover for the section On Teachers, and the very first poem asks its reader to imagine the whole reality of the school from the perspective of no longer such "foreign-born, familiar faces" among us:

Can we imagine the absence of their prayerful pace
Along wood-fringed fields and arched walkways,
Along the meandering rise from school to chapel,
Their habits in stark contrast to the scrub oak
And mesquite through which they wend their way?

This beginning is a reminder that all things come under the sign of loss, and as Tom puts it urgently at the end of "Circumference," it is a summons to see and love what is passing away while there is time, to "Seize the day!"

Death and loss are realities throughout the book. One poem

"Flashing Lights / in memory of Katherine Sorensen" imagines the dying mother seeing her son off to school. Two poems remember Coach Tom Hillary and the "incomprehensible speed" of his passing away. The poems feel personal, but not intrusive on a private grief. They lift these sufferings into the common holding of the community that feels and comprehends them. What best characterizes these poems is the kind of faith that Tom Pruitt finds in Fr. Damian's sculptures: "the eyes slit askance to better penetrate / Any easy piety, any smug dismissal of the stone's rough edge."

Everywhere in the volume is also the "meted joy," the phrase that closes another poem. Thinking about these scenes and images reveals a world of surface quiet and extraordinary depth. As boys heedlessly leave the bus he drives, caught up in their own concerns and "unaware of the darkness / Which presses them silently into fragility," Tom thinks of the deep good that lies in "sheer curteisie" — the practice of a long-discarded world of forms, "When naming called a spirit into flesh / And bent us all in homage to the act." Watching students in class, he wonders about their destinies—Odysseus or Icarus? Another poem, "Gargoyle," counsels a suicidal student whose mind is given over to monstrosity and darkness not to "blow out the candle":

The poems have a confident homeward turning, a deep and steadfast reliance on "the ancient, sacred ritual" — both of faith and of language itself.

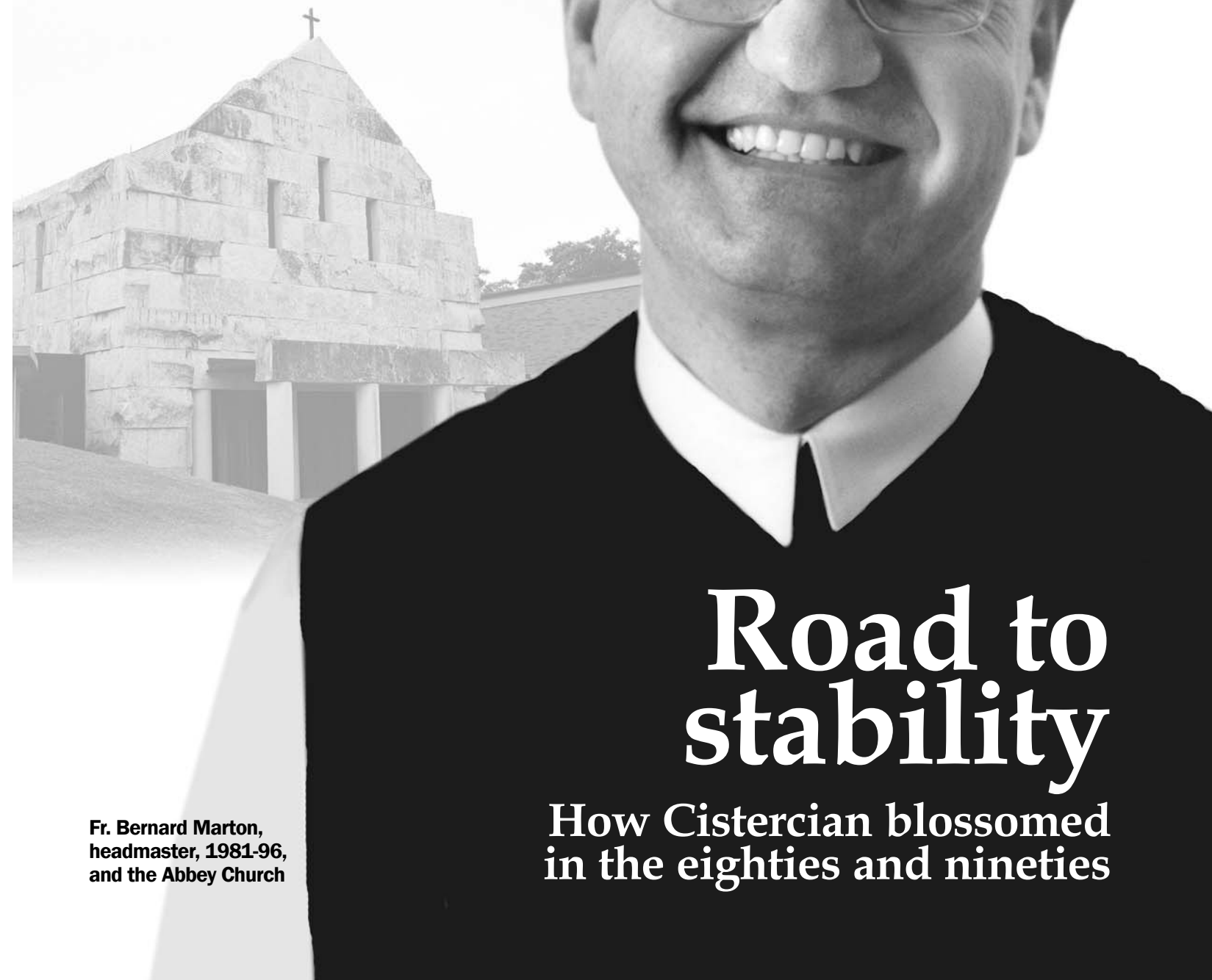
These poems by themselves comprise a great gift. Added to them is the visual beauty of the book. It has been conceived with rare taste. Almost every page has a photograph or painting by one of a number of Cistercian students, teachers, monks, each image fascinating in its own right. The splendor of so much to look at would distract one from reading a word of Tom Pruitt's if the images did not so perfectly supplement and enlarge the sense of the poems. What is most impressive is the sense that here, with apparent effortlessness, the convergence of word and vision has simply happened. Here is a known world being more deeply articulated, seized in this day and kept as the measure of what is yet to come. There is much to celebrate in *Familiar Portals*.

The CISTERCIAN CONTINUUM

For family, friends, and alumni of Cistercian Preparatory School

June 2003

A 40th anniversary retrospective, Part Three



Road to stability

How Cistercian blossomed
in the eighties and nineties

Fr. Bernard Marton,
headmaster, 1981-96,
and the Abbey Church

Dear Cistercian Families, Friends, and Alumni,

With this issue of *The Continuum* we conclude the 40th anniversary retrospective, our way of celebrating this major milestone. Through this three-part series, we have been able to gain some perspective on the early challenges and the many triumphs of the past 40 years. **David Stewart '74** has pieced together meaningful moments and personalities into a compelling and enlightening narrative. I cannot tell you how many people have commented on this series and its many insights into the “real story” of Cistercian.

The series has helped us appreciate how the Cistercian Abbey and Cistercian Preparatory School depend on each other — the monks live out their religious vocation by teaching the boys, and the students grow in mind and soul by learning from the monks. **Bob Newkirk '84** poignantly captures the significance of this relationship in a brief memoir he calls, “A changed life.”

When you receive this issue of *The Continuum*, many of you will be enjoying summer vacation. May all have a wonderful summer, relaxing and renewing ourselves, so that we can return in the fall with the commitment to enkindle and enlighten all those we meet.

Fr. Peter Verhalen '73
Headmaster

CISTERCIAN
PREPARATORY
SCHOOL



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Headmaster

Rev. Bernard Marton
*Assistant Headmaster
College Counselor*

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F E A T U R E S



FOSTER FAMILY 17-year-old Marton Antal (a.k.a., Fr. Bernard) with his first US foster family, the Petersons of Irving, in 1958.

40th anniversary
RETROSPECTIVE
Part Three

Road to stability
and excellence 6
Fr. Bernard's secondary education in
the US played an important role in
his tenure as headmaster. With a combination of Old World
charm and New World know-how, he would help Cistercian
double in size and gain financial stability.

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Cover photography: Fr. Bernard by Randy Eli Grothe
(published in 1990 by *The Dallas Morning News*)

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.

FACILITIES

New gymnasium to be completed ahead of schedule

Thanks to all those who contributed to *The Campaign for Cistercian*, the sporting life at Cistercian is about to take a dramatic turn for the better.

Students returning this fall will find the new gym nearly complete, the old gymnasium remodeled, the Upper Field improved, and three new tennis courts.

Andres Construction Services will turn over the new gym weeks ahead of the projected October 15 completion date. It will feature a premium maple floor, an attractive lobby, and plenty of space for hoops.

Spectators will enter both gyms through the lobby area that will include a trophy case, concession area, restrooms, plus stairs and an elevator to the lower level of the old gym.

The hardwood court in the old gym will be moved to allow room for the bleachers to be placed adjacent to the new lobby.

A complete renovation of the gym's basement level may confound unprepared football players who show up for two-a-days in August.

The new floorplan is configured around a hallway that will run from the central front entrance to the stairway and elevator in the new facility.

The enlarged weight room will be located to left of the central hallway behind a glass store front.

Three distinct locker rooms will be give the varsity, junior varsity and middle school teams their own dressing areas. But students will have difficulty hiding from coaches, who will have indi-



Photo by Jim Reisch

TASKMASTER Rodger Harrison, project superintendent for Andres Construction Services, has pushed the gym weeks ahead of schedule in just 120 days of work. He expects to complete the remodeling of the old gym in time for football practices in August and to complete construction of the new gym shortly thereafter.

vidual offices equipped with windows to foster supervision of locker room activities.

The Upper Field has been moved towards the Trinity River to accommodate the

new gym and has been sodded with the same turf (Tiff Bermuda 419) as Hawk Field. It will provide an excellent practice field close to the gym. A 90 ft. by 100 ft. area between the library and the Upper Field will be used as a playfield for recess games.

Three new tennis courts will be ready for play when school starts and will afford the Cistercian tennis team the chance to practice on campus.

NEW TRADITION

Chieftan's vest presented to council prez

When students from Forms V-VII assembled on



Photo by Vincent Zimmerman '06

NEW PRESIDENT IS VESTED Tom Lewis '73 (left), a former student council president himself, speaks with newly elected student council president Coleman Easley '04 after he was presented with a hand-woven chieftan's vest from Africa.

April 15 in the theater, they had no idea they were about to witness history.

Tom Lewis '73 spoke briefly about his missionary trips to West Africa. Then he introduced Sam Pieh, a leader from Tiama, Sierra Leone and a great, great grandson of Pieh, the central figure portrayed in the recent motion picture *Amistad*.

Pieh spoke to the students about tradition, leadership, and brotherhood. He then called Coleman Easley '04, the newly elected president of the student council, to the front of the theater. Pieh then presented Easley with a hand-woven vest like those worn by tribal chiefs in Sierra Leone.

"It was a total surprise," said Easley. "No one prepared me for this."

In the vest pocket, Lewis placed a list of each of the school's 34 student council presidents.

"It's a nice way to remind the kids that they are part of something bigger than their own era," said Peter Saliga, faculty adviser to the council.

From now on, the vest will handed down to each new president after they are elected.

\$3 MILLION GIFT

Monastery undergoes renovation

Renovation on the west wing of the monastery began in June thanks to a gift from the Mary Saner family. It is the largest gift ever received by the abbey.

"This is a tremendous blessing," Abbot Denis said. It is especially important because the monastery does not have an endowment fund to provide for its upkeep.

Various elements of the monastery have been in need of repair for some time. The gift will fund the repair of the roofs, air conditioning systems, and plumbing, all of which were failing.

The remodeling includes stripping the building down to a shell and rebuilding all interior walls. A new elevator will be installed that will be large enough to accommodate a gurney for ill monks.

Rodger Harrison of Andres Construction expects to turn over the completed west wing to the monks in October. Mary Saner's generosity to the Cistercian Abbey began in the fifties when she contributed funds to build the first wings of the monastery. She also provided furniture and clothing for the monks in the sixties.

When she passed away, her will called for much of her estate to flow through her son, John Saner. When he grew very sick last year, the abbot was notified of the gift.

Abbot Denis and Fr. Bernard presided over Mr.

Saner's funeral last summer.

CLASS OF '93 GIFT

Hawk Field flagpole honors Coach Hillary

Don't be surprised if you hear the national anthem at the next Cistercian home football game.

Thanks to the thoughtfulness and initiative of the **Class of '93**, Hawk Field now sports a flagpole behind the end zone near the trestle (so it can serve baseball games as well).

"We wanted to make a tangible contribution to the school to commemorate our 10th reunion," said Mike Wang '93, who spearheaded the effort. The idea for the flagpole came about at a football last fall.

"Maybe giving a gift like this will become a tradition with 10th year reunion classes," Wang said.

The flagpole was dedicated May 24 during the class' reunion gathering with the words, "We, the Class of '93, dedicate this flagpole today in memory of Coach Hillary. May the upright pole remind all athletes on these fields the ideals of sportsmanship and fair play. May the flag that flies here be a symbol of the ultimate Flying Hawk."



NOTEWORTHY

■ **Michael Burns '81** has taken a position as director of development for St. Monica's Parish and School. Burns helped the school raise over \$4 million for *The Campaign for Cistercian*.

■ **Jason Mitura '03** will attend the highly selective USC School of Cinema - Television, which admits 35-40 students each year. "I'm a movie guy," Mitura insisted.

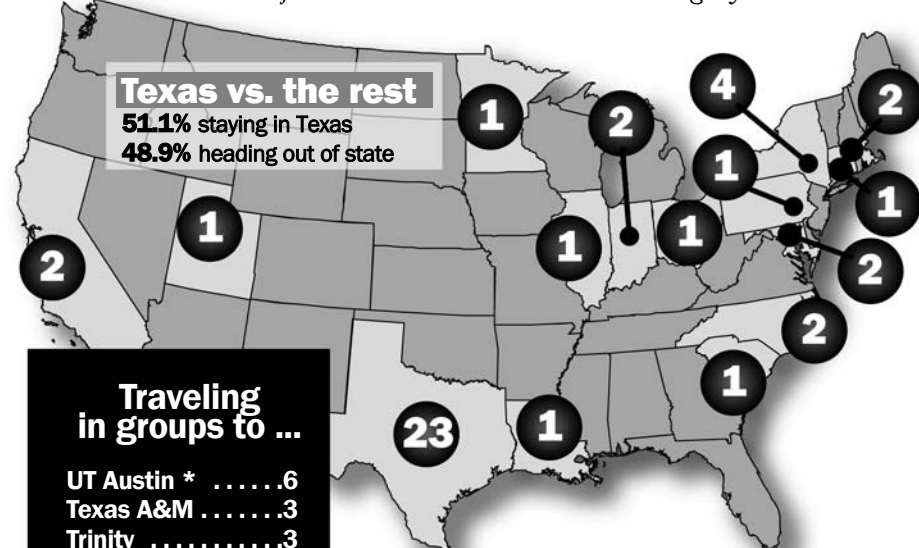
■ After serving as form master of the school's largest senior class ever (and fulfilling his duties as headmaster), **Fr. Peter Verhalen '73** headed to a Grecian villa, courtesy of the Class of 2003. After his two-week stay on the Aegean, Fr. Peter traveled to Hungary and then to Schlierbach High School in Austria, where he studied his junior year. Prior to this journey, Fr. Peter and the **Class of '73** presented **Fr. Roch** with a teak bench and an oak tree in celebration of their 30th reunion.

■ Valedictorian **Guy Krug '03** will attend Yale University to study history and economics ... Salutatorian **Mukund Ramkumar '03** will attend Stanford University to study biology and economics ... **Andrew Milner '03** is interning in the architectural offices of **Gary Cunningham '72**.

■ The junior varsity JETS (Junior Engineering Technical Society) team placed first in the nation and first in the state TEAMS competition held last month. All are from the **Class of '04**: **John Davies, Derek Horton, Mark Lewis, James Peacock, Nick Queralt, Chris Umphres, Patrick Whittington, and Parker Wolf**.

Class of '03 prefers Texas by a nose

Number of Cistercian seniors matriculating by state



Texas vs. the rest
51.1% staying in Texas
48.9% heading out of state

Traveling in groups to ...

UT Austin *6
Texas A&M3
Trinity3
Boston Univ.2
Duke2
Notre Dame2
New York Univ ...2
SMU2
SW Texas State ...2
TCU2
Naval Academy ...2

* One is UT Plan II

Traveling solo to ...

Baylor
Carleton
Colorado College
Loyola NO
Loyola of Chicago
Rice
Southwestern
Stanford
Texas Tech
Univ. of Dayton
Univ. of Rochester
Univ. of South Carolina
Univ. of Dallas
US Military Academy
USC*
Villanova
Yale
* See "Noteworthy"



40th anniversary
RETROSPECTIVE
Part Three

Road to stability

By the end of Fr. Bernard's 15-year tenure, Cistercian had been transformed. Not only had the student body and facilities doubled in size, the school had gained financial stability and fulfilled its founders' dreams.

By DAVID STEWART '74

THE WHOOPING AND HOLLERING SHOOK the walls of the visitors' locker room at Greenhill. Inside, red-faced smiles, pumping fists, loud hugs, and sweaty high fives ruled. Members of the **Class of '81** heaped praise on one another, basked in the glow of their heroics, and savored their last glorious moments as Cistercian football players.

The Hawks had just demolished their rival, 36-6, and earned the school's first TISC (Texas Independent Schools Conference) crown. This victory capped an 8-2 season, the finest record in Cistercian's eleven-year football history. For the seniors, this grand moment was made all the more special by the lean times, when they had been called on to uphold Cistercian's honor as freshmen and sophomores. It hadn't been pretty.

Some of those humiliating defeats motivated the Hawks during this unforgettable season. "I've never seen a group come into a season so ready to play," said Coach Bob Haaser. (The

BUILDING PROGRAM Fr. Bernard Marton (center) executed Cistercian's growth plan that required building the Science Center in 1985 and staffing the expanded operation with quality people. At Fr. Bernard's request, Bob Haaser (right) moved from head football coach/athletic director to form master in 1983. Tom Hillary (left) took over for Haaser in 1984 and developed into one of the top coaches in North Texas.

seniors were particularly motivated to shut out Greenhill this night, but the starters were persuaded to sit down in the fourth quarter and the Hornets scored on their last drive of the game.)

Fr. Denis, the form master of the Class of '81, was lying in a hospital bed at St. Paul's Hospital. He had refused pain medicine so he could stay up to learn the score of the big game. Several nights before he had undergone back surgery (his third, and second since taking over as headmaster). Doctors had fused together vertebrae L4 and L5 and removed scar tissue and spurs that were irritating the surrounding nerves.

At around 10:30 that night, his umpteenth call to the coach's office in the Cistercian gym was finally answered by Coach Haaser, who had just stepped off the bus from Greenhill. The coach delivered the good news. Fr. Denis then spoke with several of the team's captains and rejoiced with his boys over their success. They had overcome years of hardship and finally succeeded at what was so important to them. They were going out as winners.

Since his most recent surgery, Fr. Denis had been thinking about the obstacles he had overcome as headmaster (and as form master of a graduating class). He wondered how he might go out a winner. The months of pain and cortisone shots prior to the surgery had taken their toll. Although only 45 years old, Fr. Denis felt beaten down.

"After the surgery, I thought it is time for me to resign," Abbot Denis remembered. "Fr. Bernard could enjoy being headmaster so much more than I could.

"I felt the job had aged me," he said. "I didn't want it to kill me. I thought it was wrong to expect me to be headmaster until I failed. Why not leave while I was ahead of the game?"

NOT LONG AFTER ASSUMING THE OFFICE OF headmaster in June 1981, Fr. Bernard received some sage advice from Bryan Smith. The school's venerable board member and father of five Cistercian graduates had studied succession in organizations for years. He knew that following a very successful leader like Fr. Denis posed special difficulties. The complications of this particular succession, however, appeared to zip right off the charts for another reason: the former leader was not going anywhere. Fr. Denis would continue to teach at Cistercian, and he was not the type to sit by idly if things weren't going well.

"Just don't screw it up," Smith counseled, half grinning, half growling. Smith knew the tasks ahead were complex and he didn't want Fr. Bernard to take them lightly. He also wanted to challenge the 40-year-old headmaster.

"I was new to the job and still a little naïve," Fr. Bernard acknowledged. "I took his advice personally."

In some respects, Cistercian was running smoothly. But financially, the school remained on shaky ground. "I don't care about your budget," Abbot Anselm had warned Fr. Bernard in 1981, "but the monastery is not going to subsidize the school." The financial concerns could be traced directly to a major flaw in the school's original operating formula.

That program designed by Fr. Damian Szödényi in 1962 — one offering a broad curriculum to each class of approximately

20 students — proved inefficient and unprofitable. Such small classes simply could not support a varied curriculum and the faculty needed to teach it. Fr. Denis had come to understand the problem clearly in the mid-seventies.

"It was a problem of linear programming," Abbot Denis collected. "We needed parallel classes (i.e., two sections of approximately twenty boys each) in order to employ our faculty members fully, to make use of our facilities efficiently, and to schedule seven class periods a day." Parallel classes made teachers more efficient by allowing them to teach two classes (i.e., the same material to two sections) from one class preparation.

In 1976, Fr. Denis decided to take a stab at expansion. He added a second section to Form III, a form for which there was always an abundance of applicants. To make room for the new students, a new lunchroom was constructed on the ground level between the Middle and Upper Schools (courtesy of an \$80,000 donation from Bryan Smith). The library was moved into the space vacated by the lunchroom and classrooms were added in the old library location.

But adding so many students in Form III created academic, scheduling, and social problems. By 1980, when they entered their sophomore year, most of the newcomers had left and the Class of '82 was reduced once again to a single section.

While this first expansion attempt failed, both Fr. Denis and Fr. Bernard began to understand the dynamics involved in expanding the student body. Quick fixes would not do. Students entering after Form II had a difficult time catching up academically; only highly qualified students could be expected to meet such a challenge. They also realized that a form's sense of community was difficult to foster when large numbers were added after Form II. Growth would eventually have to start at Form I and slowly work its way up through all eight forms.

When complete, the expansion would help the school achieve financial stability. Only then could the school begin to pay the monks more than a pittance for their teaching services. Then, and only then, would Abbot Anselm's decision to operate a prep school be vindicated.

Expanding the school, however, would entail solving many difficult problems, like how to drum up more applicants, how to staff the growing enterprise, and where to teach the new students when they arrived.

That's where Fr. Bernard would shine.

"RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING, I KNEW that I would be headmaster one day," Fr. Bernard said, reflecting on September 7, 1962, the last day of his novitiate and the first day of school for Cistercian Prep. The next day, Fr. Bernard took his first vows.

In the fall of 1968, Fr. Bernard was assigned by Abbot Anselm to serve as the form master of the Class of 1977, the school's final pre-formers or fourth graders. (Fr. Denis would eliminate that grade in one of his first acts as headmaster in June 1969.)

Expanding the school would entail solving difficult problems — how to drum up more applicants, how to staff the growing enterprise, and where to teach the new students when they arrived.

To his roles as French teacher, form master, and assistant headmaster (which he was named in 1971), Fr. Bernard brought razor sharp disciplinary instincts. He had, after all, a distinct advantage over his Hungarian brethren.

After escaping Hungary at age 15, he attended Irving High School while living with his first foster family. It couldn't have been easy for the young Hungarian refugee who was still learning English. But the experience honed his senses. Then it was on to his second foster family in Dallas and Jesuit where he earned his high school diploma. He worked at the Tom Thumb on Lemmon and Lomo Alto.

Fr. Bernard's teenage experiences in America equipped him to decipher the machinations of US teenagers effortlessly.

"Most of the Hungarians didn't understand American adolescents," commented **Paul Tomaso '80**, "Fr. Bernard did. He had been one. So you couldn't pull the wool over his eyes. He was street smart."

Appearing in a classroom doorway with his hands on his hips, Fr. Bernard would lift his nose in the air. "I smell gum," Fr. Bernard would intone severely. "Of course, anyone who was

chewing gum swallowed it immediately," remembered **David Frutos '88**. "Boy, you just didn't want to cross Father Bernard."

In the early eighties, during Fr. Bernard's tenure as headmaster, corporal punishment came to an end. Although behavior problems did not cease, he seemed to forestall a lot of them.

"He had an uncanny knack for sniffing out any plot," **Tom Stimson '78** insisted. "In fact, many of my classmates noted that if we gathered in a group of three or more that Fr. Bernard would soon appear. Sporting his characteristic Cheshire-cat grin he would bop up, grasp two individuals firmly by the back of their necks and say, 'Hi guys, how's it ... going?'"

"The pause served to emphasize that he already knew how it was going and he was just there to make sure it went another direction. You have to respect someone with that much clairvoyance, but I really think it was that he cared enough about us to keep us out of trouble."

Fr. Bernard's intuitive people skills came in handy in selecting students, some of whom did not fit the "brainy" or "geeky" Cistercian stereotype.

During the spring of his first year as headmaster, a troubled

A changed life

Robert Newkirk was headed down a troubled path until he entered Cistercian his junior year

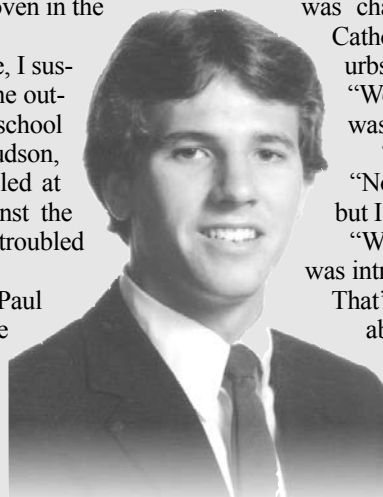
By Robert Newkirk '84

Cistercian, I thought to myself, sounds like "crustacean." I wonder if their mascot is a lobster! The thought seems childish now that I reflect on the growth in my life and how people, places, and events are woven in the threads of the tapestry of who I am.

My Cistercian story is not the usual one, I suspect, for my experience took place from the outside looking in. My freshman year in high school my parents moved the family from Hudson, Ohio to Irving, Texas where I was enrolled at MacArthur High School. Rebelling against the move and unwanted change, I became a troubled youth heading down a dark path.

Fortunately, a local rock guitarist (Paul Ruiz, Class '84) introduced me to the Cistercian campus where we occasionally were granted access to the gym to practice in the evenings. It appeared to be a safe haven for a guy who was struggling at MacArthur, hanging out with the wrong crowd, and getting into mischief. Now, I had a healthier place to go.

When Father Bernard asked, "Why are you interested in coming to Cistercian?" my response was in the vein of, "I have nowhere else to turn (it seemed the world was closing in on me)." It is at that moment, by the grace of God, I experienced Cistercian and the heart of Christ. Father Bernard told me that he believed in me and that if I agreed to some boundaries he would see to it that I was given an opportunity.



THE KID FROM OHIO Bob Newkirk '84 found trouble at MacArthur High School before entering Cistercian as a junior. He is shown here as a senior.

From day one, I knew something was drastically different. I remember carrying my books and belongings home the first week (I had learned in public school not to trust people; they would steal belongings that were not locked up). Meanwhile, my Cistercian classmates left their leather jackets, expensive camera equipment, and wristwatches on open shelves in the back of the room without a worry or concern. Trust and truth were not just words at Cistercian, they were actions.

I often share with friends and colleagues how my life was changed for the better by a small private Catholic Preparatory school in the Dallas suburbs run by Hungarian priests. They often ask, "Were you forced to go?" "No," I respond, "it was my choice."

"Were you disciplined or treated harshly?" "No," I say, "there were healthy boundaries, but I was treated with dignity, respect and love." "Were you forced to become Catholic?" "No, I was introduced to what a Christian life looks like."

That's when I share that Cistercian taught me about fruitful and authentic relationships (sharing joy, challenges, pain, difficulty, growth and acceptance) as well as taught me about character, values, and goals. I believe the heart of Cistercian is not merely the content of English, Math, Science and Art, nor brick and mortar buildings, students, priests, and teachers. It is a "process," a "way of relating," a "way of Life."

As a near high school dropout, I thank God for Cistercian. I now have a Masters Degree and the freedom to pursue whatever my heart desires. In my journey of shared experiences of love and joy, pain and growth, successes and failures, one thing is for sure — thanks to Cistercian, I have a changed life.

Bob Newkirk makes his home in Newport Beach, California.

youth from MacArthur High School asked if he might apply. Having recently moved to Texas, **Robert Newkirk '84** felt lost at his new public school. He was beginning to mix with a dangerous crowd. He sensed that he needed a more stable, supportive environment.

"Robert was slick and people savvy," Fr. Bernard remembered. "Some people wondered if he was genuine or just trying to pull the wool over our eyes. But there was something interesting about him so I gave him a chance to prove himself."

Perhaps Fr. Bernard saw a little of himself in Newkirk. The 15-year-old Marton Antal had experienced his share of difficulties at Irving High School after arriving from Hungary. Now Fr. Bernard hoped he could help out the kid from out of town.

After evaluating Newkirk's PSAT scores, Fr. Bernard said, "You can come but you must repeat your junior year and work very hard." Newkirk agreed. To this day, Newkirk insists that Cistercian changed his life (see sidebar).

"WE HAVE A NEED," FR. BERNARD STATED OBLIQUELY to Bob Haaser in the spring of 1983. The forever-young coach and history teacher might have guessed where this conversation was heading. Fr. Bernard was facing a shortage of priests to serve as form master at a time when he was planning ways to expand the student body.

Fr. Peter Verhalen '73 and Fr. Gregory Schweers began teaching full-time in 1981 and immediately joined the form master rotation (Fr. Peter with the Class of '89 and Fr. Greg with the Class of '90). Yet the problems persisted because a number of priests fell out of the form master rotation.

Fr. Mark Major, form master of the Class of 1982, decided to return to Europe prior to his class' senior year. (Fr. Bernard was forced to bring Fr. Denis back into service to oversee that class for their last year, his second senior class in as many years.) Then, during the course of the 1981-82 school year, Fr. Aurel Mensáros made it clear that he would leave the monastery after his duties as form master of the Class of '83 concluded the following year. When Fr. Denis underwent a quadruple by-pass operation during the summer of 1982, it was clear he needed a break (he would go to Rome to study Scripture for a year). Health problems also sidelined Fr. Aloysius Kimecz.

"I have spoken with the fathers," Fr. Bernard continued gingerly, carefully watching Mr. Haaser. "I thought you would like to know we think you are ready to become a form master. Do you think you might like to try it?"

The offer, essentially an eight-year employment contract, surprised Haaser, but he understood the offer was a sign of deep respect. Haaser talked it over with his wife. He loved athletics and coaching. But this was a special opportunity. Haaser concluded that his career as an educator would not be complete without a chance to lead a class.

"Yes, Father, I am ready to try new things," he told Fr. Bernard the following day. He was put in charge of the Class of '92. The job began in the fall of 1983.

"You know, I've raised a family and it is a wonderful undertaking and very difficult," Haaser reflected recently. "Being a form master is the closest thing to it."

He would have 28 sons at Cistercian at the same time: his son, **Bobby Haaser '91**, and the 27 boys in the Class of '92.

With Haaser's promotion to form master, Fr. Bernard had solved one problem, but created another. Haaser had been Coach of the Year in the TISC in 1981. Who was going to replace him and serve as athletic director? "Somehow I just

believed it would all work out," Fr. Bernard recalled.

He wanted Tom Hillary, a three-sport letterman at SMU who had impressed Fr. Bernard as a basketball coach during the 1979-80 season. He had commanded the respect of the boys. Fr. Bernard liked that.

But repeated attempts to bring Hillary back to Cistercian had failed over the past two years. He was not ready for the kind of commitment the Cistercian monks expected.

But, just when Fr. Bernard needed him most, Hillary called out of the blue and told Fr. Bernard he was ready to return on Cistercian's terms, this time as the varsity football coach and athletic director.

Somehow, Fr. Bernard had fashioned a recruiting coup out of a staffing problem. In Haaser, Cistercian had gained a great new form master whose intelligence, commitment, and personality would take him into increasingly important jobs. And in Hillary, Fr. Bernard had found one of the finest high school football coaches in North Texas, one who would create a sterling reputation for Cistercian in athletics.

"WHAT DO YOU NEED?" **Jere Thompson '74** asked Fr. Bernard as they walked together toward the school from the abbey after Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve 1982. A little snow was falling. Thompson's question arose out of conversations he had had with Stanford chum **Jim Moroney '74**. It was time, they had decided, to give something back to Cistercian.

Fr. Bernard had been waiting for such a moment. Work already had begun on expanding class sizes but he knew classroom space would run out quickly. He and Fr. Denis, who was spending this school year studying Scripture in Rome, had conceptualized plans for a new building. Al Salem, the architect of the gym, had even sketched out a few preliminary ideas for the new building.

"We need a science center," Fr. Bernard shot back without hesitation. "Then the science labs in the school can be converted to classrooms and we can continue with our expansion."

"How much do you need?" asked Thompson.

"One million," Fr. Bernard said.

"Father," said the 26-year-old alumnus, "you've got it."

Abbot Anselm and the board quickly formalized the campaign, and Thompson and Moroney took on the responsibilities of co-chairs. But they had their skeptics.

"Those kids don't have any idea what it's going to take to raise \$1 million," Bryan Smith reportedly said at the time. The abbot, a close friend of Smith's, made it clear to everyone that no construction would take place until every last dime was collected. There would be no debt, no wishing and hoping.

"That just fired us up," Thompson remembered.

The young fund-raisers found that foundations were receptive to their pitch. First of all, no one from Cistercian had approached them in years. Secondly, the school's academic record was now well documented.

Compared with the fund-raising efforts for the gym in 1971, Thompson and Moroney were aided by favorable economic conditions, a much larger parent pool, and a couple of hundred alumni who could provide some help. (Moroney had established the Cistercian Alumni Association several years earlier and had begun publishing a periodical he named *The Continuum* to communicate with them.)

Another factor worked in the favor of the young fund-raisers.

Reports of Japan's supremacy over America in science and technology filled the media and primed givers for Cistercian's pitch for a science center.

"The people at the foundations were fascinated with these two twenty-something alumni out there trying to raise funds," Moroney said. "It was like we were girl scouts selling cookies. They had a hard time turning us down."

Meanwhile, the cost of the project grew from the original estimate of \$1 million to over \$2 million. A computer lab, a large lecture hall, and more windows were now included. Bricked archways (that reminded Thompson and Moroney of Stanford) were added to tie the building into the rest of the school. Finally, an endowment fund for the building was created so that future parents would not be burdened with the upkeep of the building.

It took nearly two years to complete the campaign. As promised, Abbot Anselm postponed construction until all the funds had been collected. Construction began in October 1984 and 24-year-old project manager **Warren Andres '77** used a computer to help keep the project on schedule, turning it over in time for the first class in the fall of 1985 despite an unusually rainy year.

"The initiative and effort by Jere and Jim was just a godsend in answer to our need," Abbot Denis remembered. "They set the example of what Cistercian alumni can be."

"I HAD HEARD ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS," Fr. Bernard recalled, "stories about parents threatening their children, 'If you don't behave, I'll send you to Cistercian.' That perception — that Cistercian was some kind of reform school — showed that our image was not properly transmitted to our clientele."

During the early eighties, Fr. Bernard worked on several fronts to improve the school's visibility and enhance its reputation. His Hungarian charm and American salesmanship combined to work wonders in academic, collegiate, and community circles.

Fortunately, Cistercian's academic reputation was receiving a boost at the same time.

Before he left office, Fr. Denis decided it would be beneficial for Cistercian to become a member of the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS). He hoped this affiliation would provide a support system for Fr. Bernard.

When the accreditation process was completed during the 1981-2 school year, Cistercian became only the second Catholic school run by a religious order to join the ISAS (Academy of Sacred Heart in New Orleans being the first).

"I always tell people if you want to know what kind of organization ISAS is," ISAS founder Dick Ekdahl said, "just look at the schools that belong to it." The list included the top private schools in the area: Hockaday, St. Mark's, Trinity Valley, and Fort Worth Country Day.

While Cistercian had been accredited by the State of Texas since 1966, the ISAS provided the school with an important seal of approval, one that established it as on par with the finest private schools in the region.

In his role as college counselor, Fr. Bernard proved to be a tireless promoter of the school. He enjoyed schmoozing with admissions officers and spreading the word about Cistercian.

When people would ask him where Cistercian students attended college, he might answer, "Wherever they choose."

Visibility in the community had been enhanced back in the mid-seventies when Jim Moroney Jr. (father of Jim Moroney III and **Michael Moroney '77**) helped persuade officials at the highway department to replace the "Exit" sign off Hwy. 114 with "Cistercian Rd." At the time, this sign put Cistercian "on the map" and was widely celebrated (*The Informer* pictured the sign on its cover in the fall of 1974 with the words, "Terra Firma").

In March 1983, *D Magazine* published a lengthy piece on the school and abbey, which Fr. Bernard insisted on reading before publication. This major piece (which received billing on the magazine's cover) accurately and favorably presented the school as well as the monks behind the operation.

Fr. Bernard also began advertising wherever his competitors advertised.

"I was concerned not with how it would help us," he said, "but how much not advertising would hurt us. I wanted to ensure that we were sending the proper message. If our competitors advertised, then we needed to advertise."

But all that advertising didn't come even close to generating the kind of name recognition that lay just around the corner.

"Guys, listen up," Coach Parachini barked to his sleepy basketball players who had gathered in the gym on a chilly December morning after final exams. The boys had come to school to practice for two consecutive games against Longview Christian, one at home on December 20, 1983, and one away on January 3, 1984.

"Our next two games are cancelled," he said. "Okay now, let's get out on the court and begin practice."

"Oh well," remembered **Chris Marcellus '84**, the only senior on that year's varsity team. "Let's just move on." That, he expected, was the end of the affair.

Not quite. On Friday, January 30, 1983, *The Dallas Morning News* ran a front-page story with the headline, "Baptist school cancels games with Catholics." Cistercian was suddenly big news.

"We didn't know they were Catholic," explained Stan Kiefer, Longview Christian's basketball coach to Helen Parmley, the religion editor of *The News*. "We played them when we had a broader philosophy. Now we are just going to play Baptist schools."

Fr. Bernard was quoted as saying, "When I heard it, I thought, what kind of world are we living in?"

The article also revealed that Cistercian had been notified about Longview Christian regulations pertaining to cheerleaders (e.g., skirts no shorter than two inches above the ground from a kneeling upright position, no cartwheels). Fr. Bernard had simply instructed the cheerleaders not to make the trip.

"I wasn't going to get a tape measure and begin measuring skirts," Fr. Bernard told the reporter from the News.

When Fr. Bernard had shared his thoughts with Parmley the day before, he had no idea this was front-page material. (Parmley told Fr. Bernard later that she also was surprised to see

the story appear on page one.) At 9 am Fr. Bernard fielded a call from CBS News Radio. Fr. Bernard insisted to the reporter that this was an isolated event and emphasized that the school maintained very good relationships with its non-Catholic neighbors. When Fr. Bernard asked when the story would air, the reporter said it would be the lead item at the 10 am news hour.

The phone calls didn't stop. NBC, ABC, the *Dallas Times Herald*, Bishop Tschoepe, and many more called. By the next day, newspapers around the country had picked up the story.

"I have always admired Fr. Bernard for his response during that time," said **Jon Evans '86**. "He could have been in the national media. Attention on a greater scale than ever imagined could have been drawn to the school and to Father Bernard himself. However, he did not succumb to the lure of the media, which is a hard thing to do. I do believe that Father Bernard wanted a national reputation for Cistercian, but not in that manner and not by those means."

Despite Fr. Bernard's best efforts to defuse the story, it bounced around the papers in various columns and letters to the editor for over two weeks.

"These have been very trying days for me, a crash course in PR," Fr. Bernard wrote shortly after the hubbub had subsided.

Only later would it become clear that the incident had sent Cistercian's name recognition through the roof. Overly zealous school officials in Longview had unwittingly blessed Cistercian with the kind of nationwide publicity that money can't buy.

Fr. Bernard had handled it like a pro.

"**H**OW LONG DO YOU THINK YOU'LL stay?" Fr. Bernard asked **Greg Novinski '82** during his interview for a teaching position in 1988. "Perhaps I could stay five or ten," Novinski started to say. But before he had finished his sentence, Fr. Bernard smilingly interjected, "Or fifteen or twenty or twenty-five."

"That shocked me," Novinski remembered.

Fr. Bernard assigned Novinski to teach Algebra II to Form VI, which happened to include one **David Novinski '90**. It would be the first time in anyone's recollection that brother had taught brother at Cistercian. (Ronnie Shepherd had taught English to his future brothers-in-law **Tom Martin '70**, **Joe Pat Martin '73**, and **David Martin '74** in the late sixties and early seventies).

"This particular sophomore class was very talented mathematically," Novinski recalled, "and enjoyed testing the first-year teacher (a CPS tradition) both intellectually and in discipline. It was a humbling experience."

"Of the many things that I learned that year," Novinski commented, "the one that struck me the most was that I was 'on my own' in terms of improvement of my knowledge, teaching methods, and discipline of my class."

"At the same time, I had a strong undercurrent of support from the administration via a combination of confidence in me and high expectation of my performance."

Sounds much like the way in which Cistercian teachers handle students.

Currently, alumni are involved in a number of key teaching

and administrative positions. Besides Fr. Peter (Form IV Latin, Form VIII form master, headmaster) and Novinski (math, Form III form master, dean of students), **Tim Parker '90** plays an important role in the science department, coaches Middle School basketball, and directs the community service program. Then there is **Drew Dawson '98**, who came back two years ago to coach and now teaches Spanish as well. Finally, there is **Adam Nevitt '99** (administration and coaching) and **Peter Heyne '97** (Form I Latin). Another alumnus, **Jeff Tinker '97** also recently signed to teach full time in the math department next year. While not in the classroom, David Novinski exerts great influence by directing the Upper School dramas.

"One of the reasons for which I returned to teach (and live the life of a Cistercian)," said Fr. Peter, "was that I so admired the Cistercians who had taught me. I admired what I perceived to be their commitment to truth and culture and science in harmony with their commitment to their faith."

"Teaching at Cistercian means carrying on a tradition," he added, "maintaining some continuity of history, sharing with today's students some stories from times past, and maintaining the commitment to studies and faith that I so admired in my teachers."

Adam Nevitt suggested that alumni teachers "provide the students the opportunity to ask questions or develop a more personal relationship with faculty knowing that they experienced the same Cistercian life." He should know. Greg Novinski was his form master.

"Somehow," Fr. Peter said, "the allegiance of an alumnus who comes back to teach is unimpeachable." And students, consciously or subconsciously, cannot fail to recognize the significance.

IT WAS ONE OF THOSE RARE MOMENTS IN WHICH A thought pattern transforms quickly into a conviction, and then just as suddenly, into a clear plan of action. Call it a prophetic insight, a vision, or clairvoyance, this moment in the Rockies would have far-reaching implications back in Irving.

Sitting at Mass with his family in Minturn, Colorado on New Year's Day 1990, Jere Thompson drank in the charm of the 100-year-old St. Patrick's Catholic Church. The cold, snow-covered morning made him contemplate the men who had built the sturdy old structure and what life must have been like in those days.

Then, it hit him.

"It's time for Cistercian to have a chapel," Thompson thought.

"It was a real strong feeling," he remembered. "There was no hesitation and no fear. I immediately turned to thinking about a plan. That occupied me for the rest of the service."

When he returned to Texas, Thompson called Abbot Denis (who had been elected to the top post in the Abbey in April 1988) and made an appointment.

"Unless we build a church," Thompson explained to Fr. Denis in his room, "the school won't continue to be for the next generation what it has been for us."

Thompson then laid out the plan: alumni would raise the funds, an alumnus would design it, an alumnus would build it, and an alumnus would say Mass in it.

""We didn't know they were Catholic. We played them when we had a broader philosophy. Now we are just going to play Baptist schools."

— Stan Kiefer, coach, Longview Christian

“Fr. Denis quickly warmed to the plan,” Thompson remembered. “He knew that Moroney and I could raise the funds, that **Wade Andres ’75** (of the newly formed Andres Construction Services) could build it, and Fr. Peter would say Mass in it. But he was a little concerned about the idea of **Gary Cunningham ’72** designing it.”

A meeting was set up with Cunningham who had already made a name for himself as an up-and-coming architect. Within a half hour, Cunningham won Abbot Denis over. After a presentation to the community of monks, he won the job.

Cunningham’s early conceptual sketches, however, worried Thompson and Abbot Denis.

“They were really far out,” Thompson recalled. “I kept pushing Gary to modify the design. We didn’t feel like we could raise money using those early sketches.”

“Some things,” suggested the abbot, who is not renowned for his patience, “just have to evolve over time.”

But with the designs still not winning many supporters nearly a year after that cold New Year’s Day in Minturn, it was decided that Gary and Abbot Denis should travel to Europe to visit Cistercian abbeys up close. The two spent part of the Christmas holidays (including New Year’s 1991) studying abbeys, some 700 to 800 years old.

“The abbot was careful to ensure that my mindset was in ‘sync’ with the spirit of the project,” Cunningham told *The Informer* in February 1996. “I knew then that given the dedication of [Thompson, Moroney, and **Peter Smith ’74**] and the attitude of the abbot, this was going to be an important journey.”

“The design was crucial,” said Thompson, “because it would last for so long and represent so much.”

Soon, Cunningham began submitting sketches that excited everyone. They helped push the fund-raising effort along. It had been slow-going for a while. Foundations do not contribute to the construction of churches so the burden fell squarely on the Cistercian community, alumni, parents, and friends. While the campaign team expected to raise about \$100,000 from the 460 alumni (none of whom were over 40), they came through with \$200,000. Everyone understood the project’s importance.

“An important break came,” Thompson remembered, “when we met with Lynn Northrup (grandparent of **J.D. Northrup ’96** and **Robert Northrup ’00**) who made a generous offer to underwrite a significant amount of limestone for the chapel from his quarry in Midland.”

Construction began during the summer of 1991 and Andres Construction brought the unique structure to completion on time. The church was dedicated on May 10, 1992.

“Of all the things I’ve done outside of my family,” Thompson said, “nothing has made me feel better than working on the Chapel. It was great. The priests loved overseeing the workers lay the limestone blocks. Fr. Aloysius spent a lot of time just watching. It was very rewarding.”

“It is like a piece of heaven for the monks,” said Smith, who would lead the school’s next two capital campaigns for the library (1996) and the new gym (2003).

“When the Abbey Church was built,” Abbot Denis reflected, “the monastery was complete. We were overwhelmed. It rewarded us and it made clear that we were understood and supported. That was the greatest gift the alumni could have given the Cistercians for what we had invested in the school.”

“It has a considerable unifying effect on the community of monks. There was not a critical word about the chapel, and we know how to be critical. The church is the apple of our eye. A marvelous thing.”

“The Chapel is the ultimate sign of why we’re there,” said Paul Tomaso. “It is timeless. It’s going to be there forever. Its solidity and its simplicity say everything about Cistercian.”

“The Chapel is, for me, a fine example of the CPS commitment to excellence,” said **Sam Wing ’84**. “Every detail is completed to perfection with some of the most solid construction imaginable. More importantly, it is where numerous friends were married and their children — as well as my children — were baptized. Without this chapel, graduates would have no common venue for all these important events. It keeps us coming back, and for the most important events of our lives.”

“It changed the atmosphere of our daily life,” Abbot Denis emphasized. “We also now see hundreds of people every Sunday. The choir at UD comes to sing here because of the excellent acoustics and that brings many UD students to listen to our preaching, to go to confession, and to seek our counseling. It has all come about because the alumni built the church.”

“The Chapel has elevated our self-esteem,” Fr. Peter suggested, “and I think young men [pondering a vocation] are attracted to people who are happy, grateful, and proud.”

As Thompson had envisioned, the Chapel was far more than payback; the Chapel was a way for the Cistercian alumni, parents, and friends to “pay it forward,” creating a foundation for the future of the abbey, and so for the school.

In August, the Chapel will begin to fulfill everyone’s fondest hopes when three novices are set to join the community.

“THIS IS WHERE I WANT TO GO TO school,” seven-year-old **Matthew McAuliff ’00** told his dad on a visit to Cistercian in 1988. The words warmed the heart of **Steve McAuliff ’71**. Two years later, Matthew McAuliff was admitted to Cistercian’s Class of ’00, the first legacy in the history of the school.

“It was a total kick to see my son have to go through Latin class with Fr. Matthew,” McAuliff Sr. laughed. “There’s hardly anything that can compare with that as a common experience between father and son.”

Since Matthew McAuliff entered Cistercian in the fall of 1981, the number of legacies has grown nearly every year. **Mike McGee ’75** has a stepson, Brandon Pitzer, who graduated this spring. Next year, a **Godat** and an **Arras** will graduate, a Moroney the year after that, then a Tomaso and a Thompson. In the Middle School, the number of legacies has swelled. The Class of 2010 boasts six legacies.

Parents of legacies often remark on how many things about a Cistercian education have remained the same. Each alumni parent agrees, however, that behavior and discipline have changed dramatically for the better.

First, corporal punishment disappeared in the early eighties. “Corporal punishment ceased?” **Smokey Briggs ’84** asked. “Did Fr. Matthew get that memo?”

At first, behavior remained unchanged.

“Our class was an exercise in non-discipline,” said **Chris Crawley ’83**. “Many of us were on some kind of probation for much of the V-VIII Forms. An occasional pop on the back of the head was commonplace, and usually deserved. They tried to keep us in-line.”

But slowly, the tide began to turn.

“Somewhere in the late eighties, there was a palpable change,” asserted Greg Novinski. “It was no longer us versus them.”

“Students nowadays realize that the school is working in

FAMILY ENTERPRISE (From left to right): Fr. Bernard, Fr. Peter, and Abbot Denis. Cistercian’s three most recent headmasters have set an example of how to work together.



Photo by Tadd Myers

their interest,” Fr. Roch Kereszty said. “It doesn’t have to be some kind of struggle between students and teachers.

“For me, it used be very difficult to maintain discipline,” he recalled. “It was like being on the front lines. I was afraid of every new trick the boys would present. But, gradually, I gained self-confidence and it just disappeared.

“Now I say to them, ‘Don’t try this. You know I am half deaf. Don’t take advantage of me.’”

“The boys now seem to understand that the teachers are on their side,” explained Novinski. “We’re all headed in the same direction. Teachers are not perceived to be bending the students to their will.”

“We used to look back through old yearbooks,” said **Jeremy Gregg ’97**. “We saw the beer cans, senior lounges, and cigarettes, and resented the loss of what seemed to us the great golden age of the school. Our lunch breaks were unfortunately not filled with the stories that we would be ashamed to tell our children; we mostly just spent our time on the field, ensuring that we would be disgustingly sweaty before the afternoon classes.”

Not only are students less likely to cause serious troubles these days, they also are more likely to demonstrate their respect and appreciation for their teachers and form masters.

“Before I begin,” bellowed Jim Moroney to the Class of 2001 several years ago when invited to discuss business ethics with Fr. Roch’s class, “I want you to know that you are so lucky to have someone like Fr. Roch as your form master.”

Before Moroney had finished his sentence, the entire form rose in unison and delivered a rousing, standing ovation. Moroney was astounded.

“We were more conflicted, more angst-filled. We had a more complex relationship with our form master. But, this was a mutual admiration society.”

— Jim Moroney ’74

“I had hoped to tell them something that it took most of us many years to learn,” Moroney recollected. “Turns out, they were way ahead of me. They clearly did appreciate Fr. Roch.

“It was remarkably different from the way we would have reacted,” Moroney commented. “We were more conflicted, more angst-filled. We had a more complex relationship with our form master. But, this was a mutual admiration society.”

Fr. Roch believes the respect and improved behavior can be attributed partly to Cistercian’s excellent reputation

and its ability to select the best students and families.

“This selection process also makes the students feel privileged to come here,” he said. “Students today have a genuine respect for the school and its teachers.”

“Throughout society today, the relationship between students and authority figures is not so antagonistic as it was in the seventies,” he suggested. “The Vietnam War seems to have ignited a crisis of confidence in parents, politics, and the church. Today, kids have a lot more confidence in society’s structures.”

“That standing ovation was perfectly natural for us,” said **Chris Gruber ’01**, who believes any one of his classmates would say the very same thing. “We were very into giving Fr. Roch standing ovations and we still are.”

While that appreciation may be widespread among recent graduating classes, the Class of ’01 had reasons to be particularly grateful.

“Not only did he wait on us hand-and-foot,” **Brad Weiland ’01** shared, “he helped us through some very difficult times, like the passing of Brian Price during our freshman year and the

passing of Coach Hillary two years later.”
“Those were times,” Gruber reflected, “that we saw with great clarity how deeply he loves us.”

“I JUST KEPT THE TRAIN ON THE TRACKS,” said Fr. Bernard, reflecting on his 15-year tenure as headmaster. “I was just a caretaker.” This sentiment reflects the long-term, selfless perspective of a man who, in 1993, advised Abbot Denis that he was ready to step down as headmaster. He was primed for other things, like running marathons.

The abbot finally allowed Fr. Bernard to pursue other activities in June 1996. Fr. Bernard was the first Cistercian headmaster with an American high school education. He was the last with a Hungarian accent. For 15 years, he personified Cistercian’s unique mix of Old and New World values.

Fr. Bernard left Cistercian wholly transformed. Using all of his ample promotional and inter-personal skills, he implemented a complex expansion plan that doubled the size of the student body, with no reduction in academic standards. In fact, Cistercian emerged from his stewardship as widely recognized for both its academic and athletic excellence.

The expansion also brought financial stability. Abbot Anselm would have been relieved. During his 33 years in Texas, financial issues had consumed him. Now, eight years after his death in August 1988, he would no longer have to worry.

It had taken nearly 35 years and four headmasters, but the school finally had achieved the kind of success that stabilized the abbey’s finances and direction. The abbey’s stability, in turn, provided a guarantee that Cistercian would remain for future generations what it had been for the first 33 graduating classes.

“When you look at all the changes in the heads of private schools in the area,” Bryan Smith insisted, “you begin to appreciate how special Cistercian is. Cistercian has never had to think about going outside. There always were people in the wings who were viable candidates to take over key jobs. That is a remarkable element of stability.”

In each headmaster (and in each abbot), Cistercian was blessed with men of great talent who remained committed to the boys, to the institutions of both the school and the abbey. Their efforts always served a higher purpose than themselves. It seems the difficulties of the seventies taught them an important lesson — the strength of Cistercian lies not in any one individual, but in the community.

“The prep school is a family enterprise,” explained Fr. Bernard. “We all help each other out. That’s the strength that the monastery brings to the school. We all have been successful at one aspect or another of the job. The great thing is that each headmaster is supported by his brothers who can fill in where needed.”

As Fr. Peter took over as headmaster in 1996, he grew quickly in the job benefiting from the 26 years of headmastering experience that he could call on at any time.

“Three headmasters are not supposed to be able to live together and work together,” emphasized Abbot Denis. “It is considered impossible for the former boss to stick around without causing friction. But we’ve learned how to do it. We have given an example.”

From the strife of the mid-seventies, this remarkable succession of leaders generated a steady momentum. They created what will surely be regarded in another 40 years as the golden age of Cistercian.

THE 40-YEAR MILEPOST PLAYS SOME TRICKS on our perspective of Cistercian’s history. Thinking about it one way, the road seems very long. Cistercian’s forty years has spanned the lives and careers of some wonderful people. Marton Antal, freshly graduated from Jesuit, began to live at the Cistercian monastery in 1958 (later becoming Fr. Bernard). In 1961, 41-year-old Bryan Smith hosted a party for Catholic families interested in a new school that would be run by the Cistercian monks. In attendance was the 46-year-old Prior Anselm who still did not know whether Fr. Moses Nagy or Fr. Damian would serve as the school’s first headmaster. A newly ordained, 26-year-old priest named Fr. Denis Farkasfalvy arrived at the abbey in October 1962, dreaming of teaching French Literature. In 1963, eight-year-old Peter Verhalen sat in Merici Hall, sweating the admissions test administered by Fr. Damian.

Thinking about it another way, the school’s road to excellence and stability seems rather short. After all, it could have been 80 years ago that Fr. Damian, the school’s first headmaster, was chauffeuring prospective students home from their admissions tests. The discord in the abbey and the monks’ voting out both Fr. Denis and Abbot Anselm seems like a part of ancient history. The era of corporal punishment feels like the dark ages (not to Fr. Matthew). And, it is rare nowadays that we run into people who ask with that puzzled look on their face, “Caesarean?”

While time may play tricks on our perspective, it can’t obscure the effort it takes to build an institution like Cistercian. Looking back, it is hard to fathom the time, money, and energy that so many contributed to the enterprise. Bryan Smith and the zealots, the pioneer parents and the early teachers, Abbot Anselm and Fr. Damian, Fr. Denis and Fr. Bernard, plus the many monks who donated virtually all of their time in the first 20 years. Somehow they pulled it off. Their efforts made all of our experiences as Cistercian students possible.

It is stunning to ponder the fact that the monks earn nothing for their administrative roles (e.g., headmaster and form master) when their work in these positions has so much meaning and has made such a difference.

Form masters have lifted each of us at critical junctures along the way. They have fashioned our minds, our character, and our spirituality. They remain here for us when we return or when we have a life issue. They have performed our marriages, baptized our babies, and even buried a few of us.

Headmasters have given their entire energies to pushing the school to new heights, often pushing themselves to exhaustion. The selfless commitment of each headmaster has helped the school live up to the highest aspirations of the founders.

The monks earn nothing for their services as headmaster and form master. Nothing, that is, until a student or alumnus shares a moment of appreciation with them.

Perhaps we should take a cue from the Class of 2001 on this 40th anniversary — a standing ovation is in order.

From the strife of the mid-seventies, this remarkable succession of leaders created what will surely be regarded in another 40 years as the golden age of Cistercian.

How is your life?

"I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain" (Jn 15:16).

As I am attempting to recall the many faces I will meet at the CPS Alumni Weekend, I am preparing myself to look at the transformations that middle age, work and worries have wrought on the once familiar, happy faces of my young students. And the question that would take much greater courage in a face to face encounter, I dare to ask you here, my dear Anonymous Reader:

How is your life? How much in your life will survive your earthly life? Have you planted in this life any seeds of eternity?

I don't mean spectacular feats, heroic deeds or great accomplishments. What I have in mind is the ordinary life of an ordinary CPS alumnus. Is your life a service or just a service of the self? Are you welcoming the people who are entrusted to your care into your heart? Is your heart wide and spacious enough for them to feel at home in it? Are you present to the people you talk to so that they realize that you treat them as human beings rather than mere customers, clients, patients or just nuisances? Do you care for the poor and help them to the extent that you can?

These are some of the anxious questions I would like to pose to you (and, unavoidably, also to myself). Let us find our answer by remaining united to the true vine, Christ, so that His life and love might bear lasting fruit within us.

— Fr. Roch Kereszty

Cistercian races to fourth at SPC track meet

2003 Hawks set school records in sprint relay, mile relay, pole vault, and triple jump

Cistercian’s 2003 track team broke a number of important school records and placed fourth at SPC, one of the school’s best finishes in recent memory.

“An enthusiastic senior class really set the pace,” said Steve McCarthy, head coach. “We also have some great coaches. **Drew Dawson ’95** and **Adam Nevitt ’99** were just great and the boys really enjoyed working with them.”

Alex Gette ’03 broke the school record in the 100-meter (10.7 by **Andrew Whaley ’89**) with a 10.6 performance at

The triple jump record (43’ 3½” by **David Aird ’00**) fell to **Spencer Bethmann ’03** who jumped a half inch farther.

Trey Mohr ’05 pole vaulted 13, breaking the 12’ 6” record held by **Taylor Poor ’02**.

But perhaps the most memorable record-breaking performance took place at SPC. The sprint relay team (**Tyler Bethea ’03**, Alex Gette ’03, **David Haley ’06**, and **Michael Tinker ’03**) set a school record in the prelims with a 43.9 in the 400-meter. Then they broke their own record with a 43.8 performance in the finals, earning Cistercian third place in the event.

The mile-relay team (**Ian Cary ’03**, Tyler Bethea, Alex Gette, , and Michael Tinker) earned a second at SPC with a 3.28, four seconds off the school record.

Bethmann was the only Hawk to win an event when he took the high jump.

The track team benefited greatly by some strong performances by underclassmen. **Austin Nevitt ’04** was the team’s number three point-man, performing well in the hurdles and high jump. **Landry Jarvis ’06** burst onto the varsity scene, becoming the team’s number one distance runner. Jarvis ran three sub-five-minute miles. Coach McCarthy expects him make a run at the mile

record (held by **Robert Patrizi ’00**) by his senior year.

Haley won Newcomer of the Year honors with his contributions on the sprint relay team, the 100, 200, long jump, and triple jump.

In other meets, the Hawks placed first at the Cistercian Relays, second at Pantego, third at Holland Hall, and fifth at St. Mark’s.

A hit parade for Hawks at SPC

Hot bats help Cistercian reach semi-finals in 17-team tourney

Coach Mark Gray griped about combining the SPC’s Division I and II baseball tournaments into one 17-team tournament. And then his Hawks, who had lost more games than they’d won, almost won the whole thing.

“Baseball is such a short season,” Gray said, “our team began to jell right there at the end during the SPC tournament.”

The regular season highlights included sweeping Greenhill and Trinity Valley (one of the victories came on a seventh-inning double by Brent O’Donnell ’03) for the first time in recent memory.

But the Hawks really kicked it into gear at the tournament when the stakes were highest.

No one gave Cistercian much of a chance against Casady, the top seed from the North Zone. But a complete-game pitching performance by Zach Heard ’04

and 11 hits helped the Hawks send Casady home, 9-5.

Next up for the Hawks was Greenhill. It is never easy to defeat a team three times in a single season. But from top to bottom, the Cistercian batters were hitting the ball, racking up 12 hits behind one-hit pitching effort by Stephen Bailey ’04. The Hornets never had a chance, 13-1.

Finding themselves in the semi-final against St. Mark’s, the Hawks played valiantly before losing 4-2. The Lions went on to win the championship, giving Cistercian a third-place finish.

The Hawks were led by All-SPC performers Gary Darby ’03 (left field), Stephen Bailey ’04 (short stop), and Seth Henderson ’03 (catcher).

“It was a great way for the senior to go out,” Gray said.