

August 2005



A Letter from the Abbey

Cistercian Abbey • Our Lady of Dallas

Briefly

Brs. Augustine and Philip take first vows August 20

A special mass will be held on August 20, St. Bernard's Day, at 9 am in the Abbey Church. See story on page 4.

Mountaineering monks descend on Estes Park

In the last week of July, Fr. Peter and Fr. Julius bravely led the monastery's four Brothers (Abraham, Joseph, Augustine, and Philip Neri) to adventure and natural beauty in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Long roads and close living quarters did not deter the six mountaineering monks from enjoying a charming cabin outside of Estes Park, CO, touring much of the National Park by car and foot, fly-fishing in cool mountain streams, and enjoying the wildlife up-close (a little too close on one occasion, involving a minor brush with an elk on the drive home).

The scenery, as well as the simple intimacy of our daily liturgies in the cabin, proved deeply refreshing to both body and soul.

Evenings proved great times for the Fathers and Brothers to strengthen their fraternal ties, offering such pleasantries as Br. Philip's down-home cooking, Br. Abraham's amazing card tricks, and Fr. Julius' "monastic jokes" – or simply sitting out by the fast-flowing Big Thompson River, watching the local flora and fauna as mountain sunsets gave way to clear, star-filled skies.

First Friday schedule

Every First Friday of the school year the Community's Mass at the Abbey will be at 7:30 pm.

Three new recruits join monastery



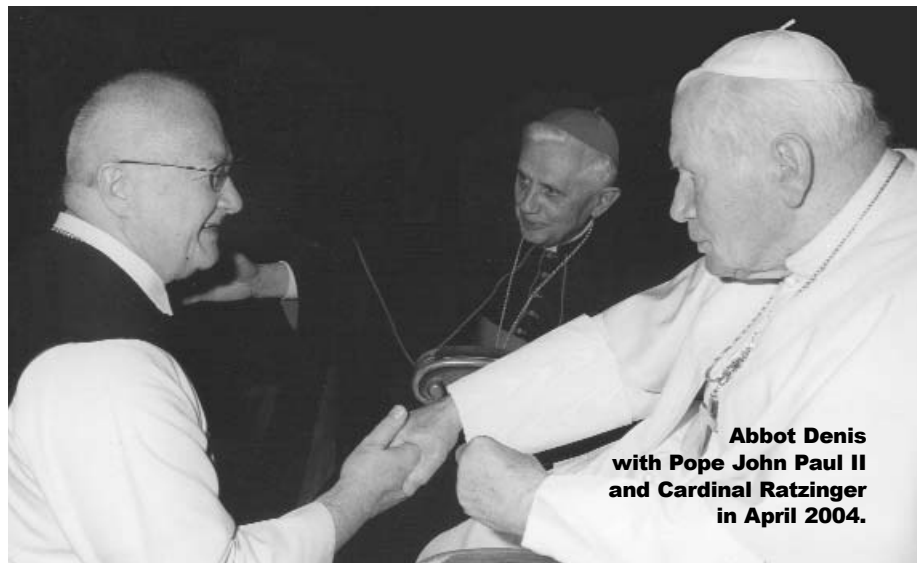
MOVING IN (from left to right) Bryan Esposito, Juan José Peacher, and Michael Strong in the Abbey Church.

On August 1, three new young members moved into the Abbey and took a major step towards their Cistercian calling.

After a brief period of "postulancy," Michael Strong, 22, Bryan Esposito, 22, and Juan José Peacher, 29, will begin their official Novitiate year on August 19.

At a private ceremony on this day, the three will receive the all-white garb of Cistercian novices, as well as their new "brother names."

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Abbot Denis with Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger in April 2004.

April in Roma

Abbot Denis describes his chaotic and moving week in Rome the week Pope John Paul II died.

By Fr. Abbot Denis Farkasfalvy

Many have already written of the events of this past April, when, in a rare moment of united attention, the world followed an unprecedented papal funeral and an equally momentous papal election. Still, it may not be out of place to include a few lines from the point of view of somebody caught amidst a transatlantic flight and

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Frs. Paul and Mark savor Alaskan fishing trip

While their efforts may not have resulted in the 153 large fish of St. Peter's famous trip, Fr. Mark and Fr. Paul did haul in scores of rainbow, grayling, salmon, and halibut during a recent fishing expedition to the wilds of Alaska.

The trip was a "graduation present" from CPS's most recent graduating class to Fr. Paul, their Form Master. Thanks to the tremendous imagination, planning, and generosity of the class, the two priests enjoyed a full week of breathtaking scenery, five-star meals, and exhilarating fly fishing.

The days started with an early morning mass in the lodge's



Fr. Mark and Fr. Paul show off one small catch during their weeklong expedition in Alaska.

makeshift chapel. The daily guided expeditions introduced the Fathers not only to some of the nation's best fishing, but also to brown bear, bald eagles, and travel by pontoon plane. Each night, they would gather back at the lodge with a handful of fellow fishermen (some from Fr. Paul's hometown of Beaumont, TX) to exchange stories and share pictures as they sat down to an exquisite home cooked meal.

Fr. Mark and Fr. Paul extend their deepest appreciation to all those who made this once-in-a-lifetime adventure possible. It

was absolutely terrific!

Diamonds for Fr. Ralph, gold for Fr. Melchior

Fr. Melchior Chladek and Fr. Ralph March recently commemorated, respectively, fifty and sixty years of priesthood.

After being ordained a priest on May 14, 1955 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Fr. Melchior celebrated his first mass three days later in the chapel of the first Cistercian residence in Dallas, on Swiss Avenue. He was on the first faculty of the Prep School as it opened in 1962. He taught biology and life science for 15 years. From 1977 to the present he has been the Catholic Chaplain for the Naval Air Station in Fort Worth. He also assists at St. Monica's church on Walnut Hill.

Fr. Ralph was ordained on May 8, 1945 in Zirc, Hungary and is a founding faculty member at the University of Dallas. In the 1970's was invited to serve as conductor and choirmaster of the cathedral of Cologne, Germany. He has now returned to Dallas, and continues teaching sacred music at UD.

The Abbey celebrated Fr. Ralph's "Diamond Jubilee" at a special mass on May 8, which was followed by a luncheon in his honor hosted by the UD Music Department. Fr. Melchior's "Golden Jubilee" was celebrated on May 29, Corpus Christi Sunday, with a special mass followed by Eucharistic procession and adoration, and a reception in the Abbey's library. The Cistercian community is grateful to God and to Frs. Ralph and Melchior for many years of loving service.



Members of the Class of 2006 pose in front of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Class of '06 enjoys three-week field trip to Central Europe

Students learn of Cistercian traditions up close

Thirty-three students from the Cistercian Prep Class of 2006 took an extended European field trip between June 23 and July 14.

Under the direction of Form Master Mr. Bob Haaser, the group visited major cities in Hungary, Austria and Italy. Special attention was focused on the roots of our Cistercian traditions in these countries.

Mr. Haaser was helped with the supervision by his wife, Kay, two former Cistercian alumni, Jonathan Reinmund (Class of 2000) and Brad Weiland (Class of 2001), and also by Fr. Bernard who provided with translation into various languages and with knowl-

edge of local customs.

The hospitality by the Cistercian schools of the Abbey of Stams in Austria and of Pécs in Hungary helped keep the costs low and provided for encounters with Cistercian students as well.

In Rome the remodeled Generalate of the Cistercian Order in Rome served as home base for a number of days while the Eternal City and neighboring countryside were explored.

Using a rented bus with driver, the group made its way through Florence, Siena, Rome down to Naples and the island of Capri. They were truly enter-

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tained by a local guide in Pompeii, drank the most expensive bottled water of the world in Capri, listened involuntarily to Paul McCartney's World Aid 8 concert into the wee hours of the night in Rome.

Having visited the Sistine Chapel, obtained tickets to the Papal Audience, they had the opportunity to see the new Pope several times from up close as he passed through the large piazza in the Pope Mobile.

They attended Mass in the Catacombs of Domitilla, over the tombs of Roman soldiers, Saints Nereus, and Achilleus, a saint whose cult has been continuously observed since the end of the first century.

With some minor mishaps (lost passport, burglarized bus) they made their way through Assisi and Venice. After another full day of bus-ride they were warmly welcomed in Pécs, housed eight to a room in the student dormitory of that centuries old school.

They also had an opportunity to measure their soccer skills against a formidable foe: the end result did not favor the Dallas group, but friendships were established, and—in truly international soccer fashion—jerseys were exchanged to mark the unique opportunity and to recall the memory of remarkable events.

Once back in Budapest they were met by Abbot Denis Farkasfalvy who joined the group for a whole day as they explored the mother abbey of Zirc, attended mass in the newly renovated basilica, listened to the Fr. Abbot's narration of the experiences he and other young monks went through in the days of the Communist regime suppression.

The boys were truly impressed by inspecting the memorial plaque in the wall of the abbey church of Fr. Lawrence Sigmond who served as novice master for most of the then young Hungarian monks (Frs. Abbot, David, Aloysius, Matthew, Melchior, Julius, Roch and others) before his imprisonment and untimely death. They have also visited the true gem of a library where the original Curator showed rare books and early prints.

Fr. Bernard will put the memories of the trip on a PowerPoint presentation for the participants and their parents under the title "Il Viaggio-2005" (which can be accessed on Fr. Bernard's Web site within the Cistercian Web page's Faculty section).

A memorable April in the Eternal City

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granted by coincidence some special closeness to these events.

On the day Pope John Paul died (it was night in Rome, early afternoon here), I already had the sense that I was going to a funeral rather than a meeting. But the technical secretary still sent around an e-mail that morning: proceed with your trip, there will be a meeting.

As I boarded the plane, the Channel 8 news team picked up a last-minute standby; the reporters were "on location" in the terminal when they announced that the Pope just died.

By the time I arrived at the Vatican's Casa di Santa Marta (its "hotel" for clergy), I saw people moving out with their suitcases and boxes. A large part of the Biblical Commission stood at the main entrance, some laughing at my surprised face, some looking perplexed. "No meeting!"

With the death of the Pope, all officials, including Cardinal Ratzinger, our overseer, had lost their appointments; there would be nobody to call the meeting or preside over it. I picked up the folder waiting for me in the lobby. I will keep it as a curious souvenir.

On the front page it contains Cardinal Ratzinger's opening discourse of the Biblical Commission's plenary meeting – a speech he never delivered – and the second page is a brief paper of mine which I hurriedly wrote in Dallas at the last minute, containing a list of questions and proposals for the meeting.

As a religious priest belonging to an Order with a General House in Rome, I was among the luckiest of the suddenly "displaced persons" in our commission: in 10 minutes I was given a comfortable room and a brotherly welcome in our Generalate on the Aventine Hill.

The next five days felt like a deeply impressive and uplifting retreat, happening as a pure gift. As hordes descended

upon Rome – the final count was supposedly 4 million – the city was transformed as if under a friendly siege with an immense but mostly prayerful crowd filling the streets. My black-and-white Cistercian appearance was never before greeted with so many kindly and friendly gestures.

In the first two days of official mourning I attempted to enter St. Peter's but did not succeed. On Wednesday, again by sheer luck, I learned that a day before the funeral there will be a mass at which I

could participate if I showed up early enough in the sacristy. So at 6:30 am I was able to walk to the body of the Pope lying on the catafalque and pray right there undisturbed for about six minutes. Then, in the

apse of the basilica with about 200 priests and 10 to 15 bishops, we held a very moving, meditative and low-key Requiem Mass for the Pope. I felt I had finished my mission in Rome, and the next day I was able to obtain a ticket and return to Dallas.

The guessing game about the election of the next Pope soon began. As it turned out, the newspaper articles were mostly exercises in ingenuity. There was only one truly serious candidate.

Cardinal Ratzinger, the man under whose leadership I was to have spent the first week of April, was elected pope in a conclave which, by its shortness, duly surprised the world. This kind, learned, serious, and scholarly man – but at times playfully and almost mischievously smiling – took upon himself the heritage of St. Peter. I was delighted.

When thinking about the white-clad man in the Vatican, a special sense of trust and admiration comes over me. Many of us experienced again in some tangible and concrete way how closely our Lord cares. As in the Psalms we read that there is no other people to whom God is as close as he is to us: "He has not dealt thus with any other nation." (Ps 148:20).

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Abbey Church Services

Office of Readings
and Morning Prayer 6:00am
Daily Mass Monday
through Saturday 6:30 am
Mass on Sunday 9:00 am
Evening Prayer 6:00 pm
First Friday Mass 7:30 pm
Feast of the Assumption,
August 15 6:30 am

The Collegium Cantorum of the University of Dallas will join us for Mass on the First Friday of every month, September through December.

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Brs. Augustine and Philip take first vows Aug. 20

*All invited to 9 am mass
and following reception*

On Saturday, August 20 – the feast of St. Bernard – Br. Augustine Hoelke and Br. Philip Neri Lastimoso will conclude their novitiate by taking their first vows as Cistercians.

The vows will be part of a solemn high mass celebrating St. Bernard's feast at 9 am in the Abbey Church, followed by a reception in the lobby.

All are invited to come and join in thanking God and praying for our new brothers on this happy occasion.

For Br. Augustine and Br. Philip Neri, "first vows" will mean changes both interior and exterior. The deepest change will be a new spiritual relationship to the Abbey and its way of life. While the Novitiate is a relatively commitment-free way of living the Cistercian life, first vows

Three new recruits join the monastery

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The Novitiate is an intensive year of prayer, study, and discernment, dedicated to formation in the monastery's way of life and initiation into Cistercian spirituality. During this time, the novices will be under the special oversight and guidance of the monastery's Novice Master, Fr. Roch, and the assistant Novice Master, Fr. Paul.

Strong and Esposito, hailing from Fort Worth and Omaha, respectively, are recent graduates of the University of Dallas; both majored in philosophy.

Peacher holds a B.A. in art from St. John's College in Minnesota and a master's in architecture from the University of Texas at Arlington. While completing his master's degree and living at the Abbey's retreat house, he interned at the architecture firm of Gary Cunningham (CPS class of '72). Most recently, he has been employed as an architect in Georgetown, Texas, where his family lives.

bind for a period of three years.

Growth is facilitated by commitment, and thus vows will allow the brothers to grow in their Cistercian vocation by living a life formally committed to its essential elements: filial obedience to the Abbot of Dallas, celibately chaste love, a frugal and communal use of material goods, and the personal following of Christ.

A more visible change will be the alteration of their clothing: at the mass on August 20th, the Abbot will place on their shoulders the black scapular worn by all vowed Cistercians. The scapular is a medieval ancestor of the modern work-

apron, and on the newly vowed members it will signify the commitment and discipline of a working monk, guarding the faith and purity cultivated in spiritual life, symbolized by the white habit worn underneath it.

After the three years for the first vows expire, vows may be renewed for another three-year period. In the course of the second set of temporary vows the brothers are expected to take "solemn vows," making them lifelong Cistercians. Solemn vows will be shortly followed by ordination to the priesthood and the beginning of full-time ministry.

After the mass on August 20th, the monastery will boast 19 priests, four vowed brothers, and three novices. In three years our average age has sunk from 64 to 55 years. Glory be to God!

TOP OF THE WORLD (from left to right) Br. Joseph, Br. Augustine, and Br. Abraham reach a peak near Estes Park, Colorado this summer.

