



A Letter from the Abbey

Cistercian Abbey • Our Lady of Dallas

Inside

Jubilee Mass for Fr. Roch

Fr. Roch will celebrate his 50th Anniversary Jubilee Mass on Oct. 3 at 10:30 am. He reflects on his 50 years on page 4.

Studying in the Holy Land

An archeology and geography course on the Holy Land has taken Br. Thomas on a trip of a lifetime. See page 4.

Fr. Bede retires from UTA

After a career that began in 1959, Fr. Bede Lackner has retired from teaching. See page 6.

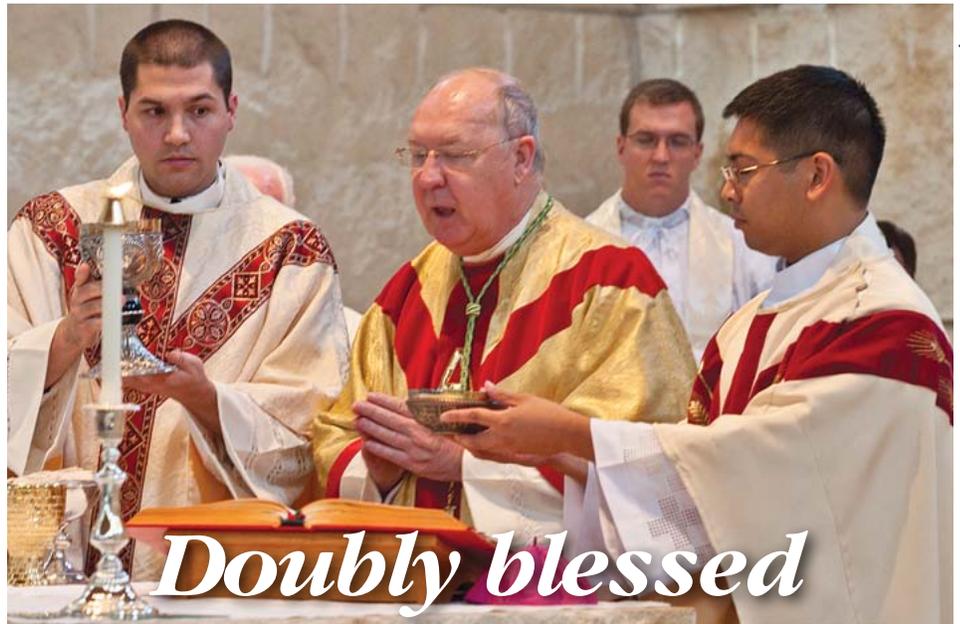


Photo by Jim Reisch

Doubly blessed

Five *good* questions for Fr. Philip

1 *At what point did you first start thinking you had a call to the priesthood?* ▶ "It was May 24th, 2001 at 4 pm. I had just finished my freshman year of college and I was at a Bible Study camp. I thought to myself 'leave everything, become a monk and I'll have treasure in heaven.'"

2 *What was going through your head as you lay prostrate on the floor during the Ordination Rite?* ▶ "I was thinking of all the saints that had been priests before me, specifically my patron Saint Philip Neri and the patron for all priests Saint John Vianney, and praying for their aid for my future sacramental ministry."

3 *What was the best part of your year studying in Rome?* ▶ "Meeting the Pope when I served as deacon for the Vespers service on New Year's Eve."

4 *If the abbey was burning down and you could only grab one possession from your room, what would it be?* ▶ "My box of yoyos."

5 *What advice would you give to someone who might be discerning a priestly vocation?* ▶ "Start praying the divine office and going to Eucharistic adoration."

Two priests and three deacons welcomed on a joyous and historic day ~ By Br. Justin McNamara

The excitement in the abbey ran high through the month of August as three brothers professed their temporary vows and three their solemn vows.

On the Solemnity of St. Bernard of Clairvaux (August 20), the new solemnly professed monks were robed in the diaconal vestments as they were ordained by the Most Rev. Kevin J. Farrell, bishop of Dallas.

Brs. Ignatius, Thomas and Ambrose, prostrated themselves — alongside Brs. Augustine and Philip, who were being ordained to the priesthood — as the faithful joined the bishop, priests and monks in imploring heaven's saints for their intercession during this solemn occasion.



Photo by Jim Reisch

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS (Top) Bishop Kevin Farrell concelebrates the Mass with Fr. Augustine Hoelke '00 (left) and Fr. Philip Lastimoso '00. (Above) Br. Ignatius Peacher, Br. Thomas Esposito, and Br. Ambrose after their ordinations as deacons.

"To know that all the Church, both in heaven and on earth, was praying for me," recalled Fr. Augustine of the moments he laid face down on the abbey floor, "and that my fellow brother Cistercians, Fr. Philip, Br. Ignatius, Br. Thomas, and Br. Ambrose, were lying next to me, about to undergo the same momentous transfigurations as deacons."

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Our young monks are making quite an impression in Rome

After the ordination ceremonies and the opening of the school year, I left on August 29 for the General Chapter Meeting of the Cistercian Order in Rome. A total of 132 Cistercian monks and nuns (from about 100 monasteries) assembled at a Retreat House on Lake Albano on the outskirts of Rome.



THE ABBOT'S VIEW

Fr. Denis Farkasfalvy

Due to the retirement of Abbot General Mauro Esteva (because of age), the first major task of the Chapter was to elect a new abbot general. After a few preparatory sessions, Mauro-Giuseppe Lepori, the abbot of the Swiss monastery of Hauterive, was elected on the first ballot.

The new abbot general is a native of the Italian region Ticino of Switzerland. For 19 years he headed a linguistically mixed (French and German) monastery.

For procurator general (who acts as the abbot general's substitute), the Chapter re-elected an Austrian monk from the monastery of Heiligenkreuz — recently made famous worldwide for its recordings of Gregorian chants.

The General Chapter's remaining tasks were a bit less exciting: discussions about juridical issues of the Order, election of minor officials, and reports about various groups of monasteries ("Congregations"). These were followed by Q&A periods, serving as sessions for providing mutual information about the present state and endeavors of the Order.

Most remarkable and encouraging was not so much the large number of superiors and delegates from Viet Nam — a growing trend for the last ten years — but, for the first time, their active participation.

Thanks to the hospitality of the various European Cistercian houses who hosted the visiting Vietnamese, we heard, one after the other, their interventions in French, German, Italian or English (yes, all these four languages) expressing their views on various matters.

One young Vietnamese brother stood up to comment on the issues of Cistercian brothers from so many monasteries — with vastly different cultural and spiritual traditions — coming together in Rome to advance their studies.

He recommended to the assembly that they take the young brothers and priests of Dallas as models of openness, friendship, and mutual help.

Needless to say, after this intervention I spent several meals and recreations answering questions about Our Lady of Dallas.

We can all take pride and joy in our young men, their accomplishments, and their well-deserved (and spreading) reputation.

Difficulties and hopes

Photos recently surfaced of a monastery devastated by the spectacular floods last summer in Eastern Germany. It was a monastery that had miraculously survived 40-plus years of Communist oppression.

The photos prompted me to reflect on how our monastery may have weathered one crisis; but our ultimate survival can never be guaranteed.

The upcoming academic year poses specific challenges on two fronts.

With many of our older monks beset by growing infirmities and several of our young brothers studying in Rome, those young monks remaining here in Dallas will be left to take care of all the routine chores in the abbey, such as caring for the elderly and welcoming guests, while also recruiting new vocations.

We also will be challenged to continue living our lives as "signs of contradiction" in a world often characterized by attitudes and actions that contradict the gospel. At the same time, our vocation must proclaim the "good news" of God's mercy.

It has never been more important for us as monks and priests to manifest both truth and mercy, and their unbreakable unity in God. Sticking to this path will help both our abbey and our school communities continue to blossom.

Historic day for ordinations

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tion with me, was a huge source of strength and cause for gratitude."

The gift and grandeur of Holy Orders bestowed on the young men were unmistakably felt by each of them.

"I'll never understand fully how this historic day of ordinations was possible," Br. Ambrose echoed, "but I do know that the prayerful support of the whole community played a huge role in it."

Never in the abbey's history had five men been ordained together.

It was only last year that Fr. Joseph, the so-called "trailblazer" of the abbey's surge in vocations, was ordained as the first priest of the abbey since 1997.

The recently ordained Bishop Seitz, numerous priests of the diocese, and several seminarians from Holy Trinity Seminary attended the ceremonies.

"Br. Lawrence counted fifty people in the sanctuary!" said Br. Ambrose.

The church overflowed with family and friends of the *ordinandi* (including many from Cistercian's Class of 2000).

All watched and prayed with pride and deep emotion as these young men graciously answered the call of Christ to serve His people through the sacrament of Holy Orders.

"In the ordination ceremony," reflected Fr. Augustine on the meaning of the celebration, "I received the greatest gift that God will ever give me in all my life, a share in the priesthood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

"So it's hard to describe the mix of awe, fear, joy, and relief that accompanied me during that day.

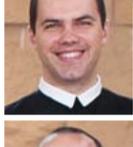
"Most of all, it was a great joy for me to feel the solidarity with my fellow priests during the laying on of their hands and then the sign of peace.

"It was so humbling when after Mass I was approached by hundreds of the faithful, from the young boys of my First Form class to my parents, my elders in the monastery, and even a bishop, and they were kissing my newly anointed hands and asking for my blessing.

"That was a powerful reminder to me of St. Paul's words about his ministry, 'not I, but Christ in me.'"

"It will take a lifetime of fidelity in prayer and service to fully comprehend, and even to begin to give back, all that I received on August 20."

Keeping up with the young monks

Monk, age	Hometown	Entered monastery	Ordination (actual or projected)
 Fr. Joseph Van House, 29	Atlanta, Georgia	2003	2009
B.A. Philosophy (Univ. of Dallas, 2003) M.Th., Theology (Univ. of Dallas, 2007) S.T.L., Fundamental Theology (Pontifical Gregorian University, 2009)			Form master (Form II), Latin (Form II), Theology (Form VI), Mass (Form II)
 Fr. Augustine Hoelke '00, 28	Arlington, Texas	2004	2010
B.A., Spanish (Univ. of Dallas, 2004) M.Th., Theology (Univ. of Dallas, 2009)			Form master (Form I), Latin (Form I), History elective (Upper School), Mass (Forms I & III). Studying for M.A., History (Univ. Texas at Arlington); anticipated graduation: 2014
 Fr. Philip Lastimosa '00, 28	Irving, Texas	2004	2010
B.S., Material Sciences & Engineering (Lehigh, 2004) M.A., Theology (Univ. of Dallas, 2010)			Mass (Form IV), Infirmarian Currently studying for a M.S., Physics (Univ. Texas Dallas); anticipated graduation: 2013.
 Br. Ignatius Peacher, 34	Georgetown, Texas	2005	2011
B.A., Art (St. John's Univ., MN, 1998) M. Architecture (Univ. Texas Arlington, 2004) M.A., Theology (Univ. of Dallas, 2010)			Currently studying Theology at Sant'Anselmo in Rome.
 Br. Thomas Esposito, 27	Omaha, Nebraska	2005	2011
B.A., Philosophy (Univ. of Dallas, 2005) S.T.B., Theology (Sant'Anselmo, Rome, 2009)			Currently studying for a S.S.L, Sacred Scripture (Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome); anticipated graduation: 2011.
 Br. Ambrose Strong, 27	Fort Worth, Texas	2005	2011
B.A., Philosophy (Univ. of Dallas, 2005) M.A., Theology (Univ. of Dallas, 2009)			Currently studying for a S.T.L, Moral Theology (Alfonsiana, Rome); anticipated graduation: 2011.
 Br. Stephen Gregg '01, 28	Dallas, Texas	2006	2012
B.A., Latin & Medieval Studies (Univ. of the South, 2005) S.T.B., Theology (Sant'Anselmo, Rome, 2009) Monastic Formation Course (Sant'Anselmo, Rome, 2010)			Currently studying for a S.T.L, Patristic Theology (Augustinianum, Rome); anticipated graduation: 2012.
 Br. Lawrence Brophy '01, 27	Dallas, Texas	2006	2012
B.S., Applied Mathematics (Texas A&M, 2005) M.S., Mathematics (Texas A&M, 2006) M.Th., Theology (Univ. of Dallas, 2010)			Currently studying for a S.T.B., Theology (Sant'Anselmo, Rome); anticipated graduation: 2011. On track to earn his Ph.D. in mathematics from UNT in 2014.
 Br. Anthony Bigney, 28	Lisle, Illinois	2007	2013
B.A., Political Science (Marquette Univ., 2004)			Religion (Form IV), Guest Master. Studying for a M.Th., Theology at the Univ. of Dallas; anticipated graduation: 2011. Further education in history expected
 Br. John Bayer, 26	New York, New York	2007	2013
B.A., Philosophy (Univ. of Dallas, 2006)			Religion (Form III), Webmaster. Studying for a M.A., Theology at the Univ. of Dallas; anticipated graduation: 2011. Further education in Theology and English expected
 Br. Justin McNamara, 28	Arlington Heights, Illinois	2009	2015
B.A., Philosophy (Loyola Univ. Chicago, 2005)			Religion (Form II), Sacristan. Studying for a M.Th., Theology at the Univ. of Dallas; anticipated graduation: 2011. Further education in Theology and languages expected

Photos by Jim Reisch

Unique Bible study

Br. Thomas embraces opportunity to “stand, quite literally, where Jesus and his apostles stood”

By Br. Anthony Bigney

For much of the month of September, Br. Thomas Esposito visited sites throughout the Holy Land as part of the Archeology and Geography of the Holy Land course offered through the Pontifical Biblical Institute, where Thomas is studying Sacred Scripture.

“You can take the course either in a classroom in Rome or in the Holy Land, at the sites themselves,” Br. Thomas said before leaving. “That decision was rather easy to make”

The trip includes stops in Bethlehem, Jericho, Nazareth, Galilee, and Jerusalem, where he visited places like the Mount of Olives, the Western Wall, and Calvary.

As a budding biblical scholar, a visit to the caves of Qumran held a special significance.

“A shepherd boy discovered [the caves] in 1948,” Br. Thomas explained. “They contained thousands of manuscripts perfectly preserved in clay pots. A quasi-monastic community lived out in the desert near the Dead Sea, and they had their own copies of biblical books.”

The journey provides the students of the program with an incredible learning “classroom” – making the setting of much of the Bible come alive in a new way.

“Friends who have returned from the Holy Land tell me that they read the Bible in a totally different way after standing, quite literally,



Fr. Thomas Esposito with his Bible at the Sea of Galilee in September. (Left) At the Wailing Wall.



where Jesus and the apostles stood,” he said.

“The biblical names and places will be much more significant,” he added, “when I read them and recall what I saw there with my own eyes.”

“I am treating the trip as the opportunity of a lifetime, one that will offer unspeakable graces and unforgettable memories everyday.”

Young Monks Education Fund

Please invest in our future

If you would like to support the education of the brothers, your contributions (including frequent-flyer miles) would be greatly appreciated. To donate to the Young Monks Education Fund, please contact Erin Hart, director of development, (phone: 469-499-5406, email: ehart@cistercian.org) or go directly to <https://www.cistercian.org/giving> (secure).

Fr. Roch reflects on blessings of 50 years as a monk

By Fr. Roch Kerestzy

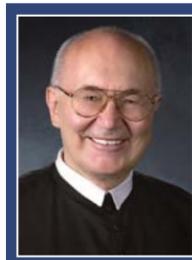
Looking back on my life, and in particular on the fifty years I have been a priest of Jesus Christ, my first word is gratitude; gratitude to God who has led me with such tender loving care from the beginning of my life up to this present moment.

He took my desires so much more seriously than I meant them; and he turned almost all of them upside down in order to give me incomparably more than I had ever expected.

Some people, and unfortunately even faithful Catholics, fabricate for themselves a sad caricature of the priesthood. They think that a priest, and especially a monk, has to sacrifice so much that they want to protect and guard very carefully their children from falling into the trap of dreaming about a priestly vocation.

They do not have the slightest idea about the generosity and kindness with which God treats his servants even in this life. They seem to have never heard Jesus’ words to Peter:

Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house, or brothers or sisters,



Celebrate Fr. Roch’s 50th year as a priest

Jubilee Mass
October 3 at 10:30 am
Abbey Church
(reception following)

or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecution, and eternal life in the age to come (Mk 10: 29-30).

Think of each item: instead of one home in Hungary, I have received three: one in Dallas and two in Hungary.

And how many loving fathers and mothers I have found in the Cistercian Order, those who have been living on earth with me and those who are guiding me from heaven.

Many brothers in Dallas surround me and offer to drive me wherever I need to go.

And to top it all, God gave me many children — spiritual children, to be sure.

This is one of the great mysteries of Christian life, that God, who is the source of all fatherhood in heaven and on earth, enlists our help to shape and form the features of His Son in the face of those whom he entrusts to our care.

There are, of course, many degrees in spiritual fatherhood, but even this small degree to which I have been allowed to help him has been an invaluable gift for which I cannot be grateful enough.

In closing, let me express two prayer intentions of mine. I pray that everyone of you who reads these lines may see and acknowledge at the age of 77 (or at whatever later age they are now) that God has given them incomparably more than they had ever expected.

My second intention is for the young Cistercian generation: I pray that each one of you may never sadden the Lord who personally called you to his service and that you may fulfill His whole plan for your life without any compromise.

Signs of peace

From the Ordination Ceremonies, August 20, 2010

(Left) Brs. Philip (left) and Augustine just moments before being ordained. (Center) Brs. Augustine, Philip, Ambrose, Thomas, and Ignatius lie prostrate on the church floor. (Right) Bishop Farrell gives the sign of peace to Fr. Augustine (top) and Fr. Philip.



Six follow the call and profess their vows

By Br. John Bayer

Peace was in abundance on August 15, 2010, as six brothers made their profession in the Abbey Church.

The three solemn professions and three temporary professions were the most ever on one day in the Abbey’s history.

“Taking vows was much easier and more peaceful than I had imagined a couple of years ago,” said Br. Ignatius Peacher, who made his solemn profession alongside Brs. Thomas Esposito and Ambrose Strong, “because a certain peace about living here and understanding about my life came to fruition this past year.”

The event, “so immense and enormous,” was also a moment of serenity for Br. Ambrose, since he could see “the entire process of my discernment protected by Christ and Our Lady.”

While the vows are “still a huge step,” he was quick to add that they were only one more step in a long series of “little steps” in life that have all been guided by grace.

Br. Thomas also seemed to take this momentous occasion in stride. Only a little excitement (and a midnight snack), he said, cost him any sleep the night before.

Of course, at the start few monks know whether or not they will finally reach the day when they commit themselves to per-

severing “until death” in the monastic life. Conviction is a gift of grace, and comes only at the moment God grants it.

We are grateful that our new solemnly

pretty smooth,” said Br. Justin, “until the trials started to come intermittently about half way through. But over the summer I began to feel a strong sense of peace and belonging.

“At that point I desired to leave the novitiate behind me and enter a new stage of formation alongside the brothers.

“Receiving the scapular and taking the vows was a concrete way of putting all that together — it felt liberating.”

With the black scapular, Br. Justin is ready to step into the Abbey’s work.

In addition to taking classes at the University of Dallas, he will teach Religion to Form II at the prep school.

Brs. Stephen and Lawrence, who after four years in the monastery have renewed their temporary profession, will continue their studies in Rome alongside Brs. Ignatius, Thomas, and Ambrose.

Moments of clarity in the discernment process are a tremendous blessing, especially since they provide insight into the joyful story of God’s activity in our lives.

We are tremendously grateful that in this age God has given our community an unprecedented number of young men ready to step forward in confidence to follow the call of our loving Father.



RECEIVING THE BLACK SCAPULAR Br. Justin McNamara receives the black scapular from Abbot Denis Farkasfalvy on August 15, 2010.

professed members have been given the gift of entrusting their lives to the Lord with so much confidence and peace.

Alongside these three solemn professions, Br. Stephen Gregg ’01 and Br. Lawrence Brophy ’01, and Br. Justin McNamara made their temporary professions, committing themselves to “persevering in the monastic way of life” for three years.

Although the commitment is temporary, it is still a significant step in the discernment process.

“In the beginning my novitiate was

Abbey Church Services

FALL SCHEDULE

Memorare Mass, November 14 4:30 pm

Christmas Eve, December 24
11:30 pm Office of Readings, Midnight Mass

Christmas Day, December 25
9 am, concelebrated High Mass

On New Year's Eve, December 31
Eucharistic Adoration 9 pm –12 midnight
(benediction)

STANDARD SCHEDULE

Office of Readings and Morning Prayer	6 am
Evening Prayer	6 pm
Daily Mass (Mon - Sat.)	6:30 am
Mass on Sunday	9 am
First Friday Mass	7:30 pm

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



Fr. Bernard Marton entertained a crowd of former students and their families Sept. 15, at the Old Monk with stories of his escape from Hungary.

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

Fr. Bede retires from UTA after 41 years

Professor of History helped curb anti-Catholic sentiment in the sixties and seventies

By Br. Anthony Bigney

After a teaching career which spanned six decades, the last 41 years as a professor of History at the University of Texas-Arlington, Fr. Bede Lackner retired this summer.

Beginning in 1959, just weeks after moving to Dallas, he began teaching.

And since then, he has taught at every grade-level: from elementary schools to graduate schools.

"We had wide exposure," he noted.

In 1969 he began his long career at UTA, where he initially faced adversity teaching at a state-run secular university as a Catholic priest.

With time, however, he won hearts and minds and softened anti-Catholic prejudice.

He sees his time at UTA as providential,

bringing the faith to his students through an academic course.

"It's about sharing yourself with your students," he said. "You teach them more than just a subject, you teach them how to be a better person."

In addition to teaching history, Fr. Bede was also active throughout the diocese, working pastorally at every parish in the Metroplex.

He also spent nearly 15 years teaching Church History and working as a Spiritual Director for Holy Trinity Seminary.

At the age of 82, however, Fr. Bede says it's just too hard physically to teach now. "You get more

tired," he said.

Fr. Bede plans to continue researching the history of the Cistercian order — noting

that there has never been a good biography of its three founders: Sts. Robert, Alberic and Stephen Harding.



Fr. Bede Lackner has taught at every grade-level in his 51 years in U.S. schools.

Vocations Retreat

If you feel you may be called to the priestly or monastic way of life, please consider contacting us about our annual "Vocation Retreat" at the abbey.

Beginning Dec. 29, the retreat concludes with Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction at midnight as the New Year begins.

For more information contact Fr. Paul at: fr-paul@cistercian.org

