



# A Letter from the Abbey

*Cistercian Abbey • Our Lady of Dallas*



## Briefly

### **Hungarian novice enjoys Texas hospitality**

From July to September, one of the youngest members of the Abbey of Zirc, Br. Bernát Bérczi lived at the monastery. The purpose of his stay was to perfect his knowledge in English. With great motivation and steady effort, he has acquired an impressive fluency in English and thus provided us with many details about the renewal of Cistercian life in Hungary. He returned for the beginning of academic year as he is pursuing studies at the Faculty of Theology in Veszprém 20 km. from Zirc.

### **Fr. Roch's newest book is available on Amazon.com**

After a year long preparation, Fr. Roch's new book, *Wedding Feast of the Lamb* was published by Hillebrand Press for the Year of the Eucharist.

The book follows the format of a theological textbook, covering the biblical sources, as well as the teaching of patristic and medieval tradition on the Eucharist, followed by systematization and pastoral issues. The book can be ordered online at Amazon.com.

### **Christmas & Easter at the Abbey Church**

#### **Christmas Services**

- Office of Readings and Midnight Mass 11:30 pm
- Christmas Day Mass 9 am

#### **Holy Week Services**

- Holy Thursday 5:30 pm
- Good Friday 5:30 pm
- Easter Vigil 11:30 pm
- Easter Sunday Mass 9 pm

## **New UD president dines at Abbey**

Dr. Francis (Frank) Lazarus, the new president of the University of Dallas, served as the Abbey's special guest on the Abbot's feast day (and also Br. Abraham's feast day).

Dr. Lazarus was accompanied by his wife Carol. Both enjoyed the company of the monks, sever-

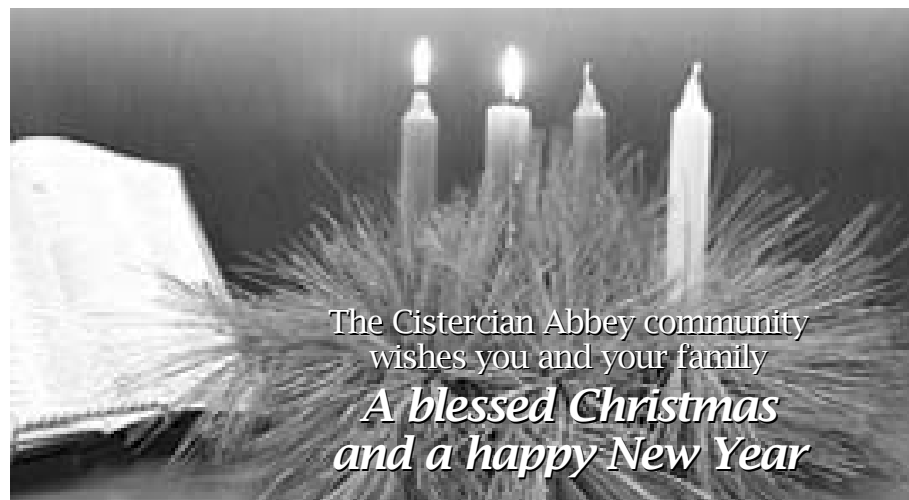


**UD President Dr. Frank Lazarus mingles at the Abbey with UD veterans Frs. Ralph and James.**

al of whom teach at the University.

In the abbey's 49-year history, all seven presidents of UD have been dinner guests.

Dr. Lazarus, who comes to UD from the University of San Diego, will deliver the 2005 commencement address at Cistercian Preparatory School.



The Cistercian Abbey community  
wishes you and your family  
**A blessed Christmas  
and a happy New Year**

## *The four candles of Advent*

*Reflecting on the  
flickering brilliance  
of these lights*

*By Fr. Abbot Denis*

**T**he Advent wreath may be the most popular observance in preparation of Christmas. As our eyes rest on the lighted candles, do we know what to focus on in our minds? Here are a few thoughts.

#### **Four Sundays — Four Thousand Years**

The four Sundays of Advent traditionally symbolize the time of waiting for the Redeemer. Primitive biblical chronology

**Continued on page 3**

# Novices inject unforeseen dynamics into abbey

For the first time in its history the monastery goes through the season Advent with five young members in formation. Our last newsletter could not report about the three novices of the year, all alumni of our school: Br. John Stanley ('97), Br. Augustine (Ben) Hoelke ('00) and Br. Philip Neri (K. C.) Lastimososa ('00). They took their habit in the evening of August 19, 2004. For a little less than 24 hours we had the optical illusion of five novices all clad

in white. But then on August 20, the two who finished the previous novitiate, Brs. Abraham and Joseph, made their temporary vows of three years. A week later these two began graduate studies in theology at the University of Dallas, while the three novices began a routine of studies, work and training in monastic discipline under the care of their novice master, Fr. Roch. Fr. Julius was appointed to be the Master of the two Junior Brothers.



**DAY OF THE NOVICES** Abbot Denis is surrounded by the monastery's five novices on August 19, 2004. (from left to right) . Br. Augustine (Ben Hoelke '00), Br. Philip (K.C. Lastimososa '00), Br. Abraham, Br. John (Stanley '97), and Br. Joseph.

The presence of five brothers in the Abbey injected unforeseen dynamics into community life. The voices at prayer soon began to sound younger, the steps became faster, the remodeled monastery appeared more fully occupied, more hands began taking care of the courtyard, more menial chores were taken care of - and a great deal faster.

The most unexpected change in community life was the addition of three members who soon revealed that they know more or at least different things about the Prep School than the rest of us. For our new novitiate class consists of young men who had spent eight years as students of Cistercian and their memories are filled with all those things which have faded — for one reason or another — in our memory. The present community recaptured the past in an unexpected way, making us more aware of the recent past and having a captive audience anxious to learn about remote memories of both Abbey and School.

It seems that a new dimension of family life has begun to unfold.

*September 18, 2004*

## Fr. David celebrates his Golden Jubilee

On Sunday, September 18, we celebrated Fr. David's Golden Jubilee of the priesthood. He celebrated his first mass in 1954 in the Cistercian Abbey of Mehrerau, Austria. After receiving a doctorate in theology and a licentiate in philosophy, Fr. David Balás joined the newly founded University of Dallas in 1958. He has taught philosophy and theology ever since. His special field of expertise is systematic theology and patristics. His is internationally known as an expert on the fourth-century church father Gregory of Nyssa.

**JUBILEE** Fr. David (seated) enjoys the reception held in the lobby of the abbey for his Golden Jubilee.





## Fr. Henry Marton returns home for visit

Fr. Henry Marton, who turned 79 on November 1, visited the monastery recently from the nursing home where he has been convalescing. He was warmly received by all, especially the monastery's young Hungarian guest, Br. Bernát Bérczi.

Fr. Henry has been improving steadily and hopes to return full-time to the abbey in the near future.

**FR. HENRY AT HOME**  
**Br. Bernát Bérczi visits with Fr. Henry upon his visit to the monastery.**

Those wishing to send him greetings, should contact Fr. Bernard Marton at [bmarton@cistercian.org](mailto:bmarton@cistercian.org).

## *The significance of the four candles of Advent*

Continued from page 1

liked to see a span of merely four thousand years between the creation of Adam and the arrival of the Second Adam, which is, of course, a much too short, artificially reduced framework for the composition of the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses. But whether it is four thousand or four million of years, we celebrate these in four brief weeks as a remembrance of that long period of waiting and groping that preceded the coming of Jesus. As St. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians points out: "There was a time when you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Light produces every kind of goodness and justice and truth" (Eph 5:8-9).

### **Four persons accompanying us in Advent**

The four candles of Advent also represent the four most important teachers of Advent. The first is Isaiah whose prophecies are read daily in the liturgy of the season. He announced the Virgin who "shall be with child and bear a son to be called Immanuel" (7:13), and spoke of "the People who walked in the darkness and have seen a great light" (9:1), as well as of "the shoot blossoming" from Jesse (David's family) into a flower "upon which the Spirit of the Lord will rest" (11:1-2). Finally, he provided a message of consolation: "Comfort, give comfort to my people...her slavery comes to an end and her guilt is to be expiated" (40:1-2).

The second is John the Baptist who proclaimed: "Prepare the way of the Lord...(Mt 3:3)" and also: "The one who is to come after me is more powerful than one" (3:11).

The third figure, Mary accompanies us in a special way. First, we are reminded of her response given to the Angel: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (1:29). Then we see her as she goes with haste to meet Elizabeth with John the Baptist still

*"There was a time when  
 you were darkness,  
 but now you are  
 light in the Lord."*

— Eph 5:8-9

in her womb, and they share in an ecstatic encounter in the joy of messianic times. Finally we accompany her as she moves from house to house, inn to inn, seeking a home for her baby, and with her we move into a stable, the home of gentle animals, who recognize their Lord and Master lying in the manger.

The fourth person is Joseph, accepting the divine message of Mary's blessedness, witnessing the sacred birth in Bethlehem and obediently shouldering the hasty flight to Egypt and prudently managing the return into the hiddenness of Nazareth.

### **Fourfold Gospel and Four Church Fathers**

For centuries the liturgy of the midnight office at Christmas included four gospel readings, one from Matthew (1:1-18), two from Luke (2:1-14 and 2:15-20) and one from John (1:1-18). Attached to the first, the genealogy of Jesus, were St. Jerome's comments, contrasting the list of Jesus' ancestors with a quotation from

Isaiah, "his ancestry is beyond telling." Thus, while celebrating his birth on earth, we keep mind his birth from the Father before all ages. The second gospel passage is explained by Pope Gregory the Great, pointing out the contrast between the census which Caesar Augustus undertook for his Empire, and the purpose of Jesus' birth enlisting us all into God's kingdom. The third text receives a commentary from St. Ambrose who sees a parallel between the shepherds' journey to Bethlehem and the beginnings of the church. As the shepherds received the command to lead their flock to Bethlehem, so has the Church received the task to prod all people to the Lord's sheepfold. Finally, the fourth passage receives a commentary by St. Augustine. The Word made flesh is not a human word, not a mere creature but the very same Divine Word through whom all things — and all words and deeds of God — were made. Four gospel passages commented by the four representatives of Christian tradition assemble all christian teaching at the manger of Bethlehem.

### **The Four Corners of the World — the Universal Call**

And finally, in our Advent we should be reminded of "the four corners of the world" and thus of representing the universal dimension of salvation. For Christ came not only to save a few, or cure only a handful. His incarnation penetrated past and future, rich and poor, small and great alike. His humanity sanctified all human existence and his suffering and death turned every form of human agony into a pathway leading to the realm of life eternal.

## 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

**Christmas and Holy Week** For  
the schedule of special services,  
please see page one.

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

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## Trinity River Dance

Cistercian students enjoyed  
portraying Cistercian monks,  
such as Fr. Gregory (Addison  
White '09) below and Fr. Peter  
(Michael Korpziel '10) far right.



For the first time, the students of the Cistercian Middle School made fun of their teachers on stage. The *Trinity River Dance*, written and produced by Mr. Dave Tanner, gave the students an opportunity to show their skills in impersonating their teachers.

Parents and fellow students packed the theater on campus to cheer dozens of middle schoolers dancing in fake Cistercian habits to (fake) Hungarian tunes derived from Franz Liszt's Hungarian rhapsodies.

The best imitations were, however, of Cistercians of local accent: Fr. Gregory, Fr. Peter and Fr. Mark reproduced on stage in copies "better than the original."

