



A LETTER FROM THE ABBEY

Cistercian Abbey

August 1997

Our Lady of Dallas



Br. Paul at his ordination to the diaconate

New Priest Ordained in the Abbey

August 15, 1997, at 10 a.m. in the Abbey church, retired bishop of Dallas Thomas Tschoepe, ordains Br. Paul McCormick to the priesthood. The first mass of the new priest is scheduled for 9 a.m., Sunday, August 17, also in the Abbey church.

Br. Paul, originally Britt Wesley McCormick, was born on August 16, 1968 in Beaumont, Texas. After graduation from high school in Beaumont, he attended the University of Dallas. He elected "Phi Beta Kappa" and obtained his B.A. "magna cum laude" in 1989 with a major in Economics. In 1991 he received his MBA from the University of Dallas at the Graduate School of Management. On January 5, 1992 he entered the novitiate of

the Abbey and one year later took his first vows for three years.

Br. Paul had begun thinking about the possibility of being a priest as a sixth grader preparing for an *ad altare Dei* award as a boy scout. From that point, he kept the idea in mind through high school. With the priesthood in the back of his mind, he chose the University of Dallas where he could take Catholic philosophy courses and be in an environment which would nurture a young person's prayer life. He was, however, still split between a life in the world of business and the priesthood. He finally took the leap with the Lord and the monastery when the decision had to be made whether or not to accept a job transfer out of state.

Entering the novitiate was a decision which gave him peace of mind with no regrets.

After receiving his M. A. in Theology in 1995, he entered the Pontifical University Gregoriana in Rome for a two-year program of specialization in Dogmatic Theology.

Br. Paul made his solemn perpetual vows on December 29, 1996. He was ordained as a deacon on January 1, 1997 by Bishop Grahmann. He concluded his studies in June of 1997, receiving a licentiate in theology—also "magna cum laude"—that qualifies him to teach theology on undergraduate and graduate levels.

His ordination to the priesthood takes place one day before, his first mass one day after his 29th birthday.

While in Rome, Br. Paul lived in the Cistercian General House which is the residence of the Cistercian Abbot General and a home to students from all over the world. There he got acquainted with many members of the Order. Last year he visited monasteries in Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary and Poland. This year he visited monasteries in Spain.

Beginning this autumn semester, Fr. Paul will begin his assignment as a teacher of Theology, Religion and History in the Cistercian Prep School. He will be the Form Master of Form I, class of 2005. He will also begin to take over the office of Vocation Director. We know that his first steps of ministry will be accompanied with many prayers and good wishes.

—*In the monastery*

• **Fr. Balthasar**, our only member with a full-time pastoral assignment, has finally asked to retire to the Abbey. The pastor of St. Francis Parish of Grapevine for almost forty years, he can look back at a rich harvest of pastoral activities. During his tenure, his parish developed from a tiny mission to a suburban mega-parish serving the area most impacted by the establishment of the DFW airport. Living in the Abbey, Fr. Balthasar will continue part-time ministry in the metroplex area.

• In the Spring semester several newcomers were welcomed into the Abbey. On March 9, two novices, Steven Griffin (**Br. Patrick**), from Shreveport, LA, and David Wagner (**Br. Gabriel**), from Columbus, Ohio, took the habit. On August 4, a new novice, **David Young** moved into the Abbey. He is a native Texan but has lived in New York for the last seven years. He will take the habit at the end of August. The new novices are all in their early thirties and are college graduates: Brother Patrick is an architect with degrees from Texas A&M and the Univ. of SW Louisiana; Br. Gabriel has his B.A. in Slavic Studies from the Ohio State University; and David Young has his B.A. in Classics from Indiana University.

• The Abbey Community's annual retreat is to be held August 11-14. The retreat master is Fr.

Jeremy Driscoll, a Benedictine of Mt. Angel Abbey in Oregon. An expert in Greek patristics and early monasticism, Fr. Jeremy is a professor of theology at his monastery's college and St. Anselm's University in Rome, Italy.

• Also, to our regret, **Br. William** has left our community to join the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement in New York.

Events in the Abbey Church

• Every First Friday of the school year (beginning on September 5) the community's Mass at the Abbey will be at 7:30 p.m. The Collegium Cantorum of the University of Dallas plans to participate.

• October 5, Sunday, 7:30 p.m. Annual Mass of the Monastery honoring the Freshmen of the University of Dallas with reception following.

• This year, November 2, the feast of All Souls falls on Sunday. We follow the Cistercian Order's liturgical calendar, therefore the Solemn Requiem Mass for deceased members, relatives and friends in commemoration of All Souls will be celebrated at **7:30 p.m., Monday, November 3**. We will send you a reminder, asking that you us the names of those deceased persons you especially wish us to remember at this year's celebration.

Community vacation at 9,000 feet

On Wednesday, July 15, **Fr. David, Fr. Julius, Fr. Peter, Br. Paul, Br. Patrick and Br. Gabriel** left early in the morning for their ten-day vacation in the Rockies of New Mexico and Colorado. They stopped first in Santa Fe, where they spent the night in the dormitory of the St. Catherine's Indian School. In addition to exploring the historic churches of Santa Fe, they also visited the Benedictine monasteries at Pecos and Abiqui, New Mexico, as well as the Los Alamos, the "secret town and laboratory," where the atomic bomb was developed in the early 40's. The next day they drove on to Lake City, Colorado (@ 8800 ft.), in the heart of the San Juan mountains.

The next six days provided ample opportunity to hike and fish for brook trout. Br. Paul turned out to be a master fisherman, providing enough brookies to feed everyone for two nights. On the last day, Fr. Peter and Br. Patrick summited the 14,000' Redcloud. Br. Patrick also organized a tour of the nearby towns Ouray and Silverton. On Sunday, Fr. Julius was asked to celebrate Mass and preach in the local Catholic church, where his arrival had been anticipated thanks to Hank and Marie Ohlenmeyer, longtime friends of the monastery and former residents of Lake City. On July 24, our visit to the Rockies came to an end, and we headed back to Dallas, and the heat.

Double Jubilee in 1998

900 years of Cistercium— 40 years in Texas

The world-wide family of Cistercians—monks and nuns of two religious orders—the "Cistercian Order" (O.Cist.) and the "Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance" or Trappists (O.C.S.O.) are making preparations to celebrate the 900th anniversary of their common root, the foundation of Cîteaux (in Latin "Cistercium"). Such a long history has produced immense discontinuities. The best book on this long history, a work by the late Fr. Louis Lékai, a member of our Abbey and a professor of the University of Dallas, **Cistercians: Ideal and Reality** (Kent State University Press: 1981) is being read and re-read by scholars preparing themselves for conferences and colloquies. More importantly, individual religious communities are making efforts to reacquaint themselves with their roots and to gain new insights into their origins.

The "holy founders of Cîteaux" are the first three abbots, Sts. Robert, Alberic and Stephen Harding. They are venerated as saints with a common feast day on January 26. The first founder of Cîteaux was Robert, a Benedictine abbot, who at an advanced age, with 21 of his monks moved out into the neighborhood called by its old Roman name "Cis-tertium," meaning a place "beneath the third" (milestone) of the ancient military road. By papal order, Robert was sent back to his original monastery, but the project survived thanks to the tough and wise leadership of his successor, Alberic, who was in office for ten years. The third abbot, St. Stephen Harding, a monk from England, was a genius for organization. He brought the monastery to its first prosperity by recruiting the best of young vocations, among them Bernard, the later abbot of Clairvaux, who inspired an expansion of the Cistercians all over Europe. The monastic renewal that began with the foundation of Cîteaux, was inspired by the ideal of "the purity of the Rule," meaning a return to the original, authentic sources of Christian



The Spiritual Battle: The opening Letter R from a manuscript copied in Cîteaux under Abbot St. Stephen Harding.

S living: the Bible, the early Church Fathers and the Rule of St. Benedict. Stephen Harding sustained in his monastery not only zeal for poverty and simplicity, but the highest standards in pursuing theology and arts. With the help of Jewish rabbis, he prepared a revised edition of the Bible. The

illuminated codices, copied under his abbatial years, contain the finest examples of medieval graphic art. After some years of hardship, Cîteaux began to found new monasteries. Stephen Harding kept the new foundations united under the collegial authority of a yearly general chapter of the abbots and a system of "visitations" by which the monasteries issued from Cîteaux guaranteed a permanent standard of discipline of religious life. The "Order of Cîteaux" (= Cistercian Order) came about from this effort sealed by a charter which the founders called "Charta Caritatis" or Charter of Charity. In this way for the first time "a religious order"—in the modern sense of the word—has been created, a remarkably balanced structure with authoritative and collegial features.

The largest celebration for the anniversary is planned in France by the Abbey of Cîteaux

itself. Unfortunately, the ancient monastery has fallen victim to the French revolution of 1789. The medieval buildings are practically all gone; of the magnificent church no trace was left. Yet since 1898, the 800th anniversary of the foundation, an abbey of the Strict Observance exists in its place, adjacent to a town called St. Nicolas-lès-Cîteaux, in the heart of Burgundy, France. It is here that a grandiose celebration is planned for Saturday, March 21, the exact date of the foundation, as recorded by the most ancient documents of the Order. In America, a plan has been made by the Trappist Abbey of Gethsemane, Kentucky, for a nationwide invitation of all abbots and priors of the two orders to hold a joint celebration following the regional conference of Trappist superiors, February 6-8. This would involve about twenty monasteries and include our abbey, also.

Cistercians in Texas: the first forty years

In much smaller dimensions, but in a quite important sense of the word, 1998 marks a historical milestone for our monastery in a particular way as it is about to celebrate the 40th year of its existence. For it was on February 8, 1958, that at its present location the first wing of our monastery—at that time only as a dependent

priory—was officially dedicated and community life began. The original plaque of dedication is still visible at the entrance of the Abbey's southern wing.

We are planning to celebrate this double anniversary of our monastery some time in the Spring, possibly on the feast of St. Benedict, March 21. We will make the announcement and

invitation in the Christmas Newsletter.

We have also made plans for a modest commemorative volume to appear in 1998 in honor of the double jubilee: **900 Years of Cistercian Life & The First Forty Years in Texas**. We want to present for our local Cistercian family the history of our Order, with emphasis on the past forty years of Our Lady of Dallas and thirty-six years of the Cistercian Preparatory School. It appears that the past history of the abbey and the school is in need of being written as long as there is reliable oral history and there are monks able to read and interpret the oldest documentation with a large part written in Hungarian. For the most part the articles to be included have already been discussed with their respective authors. Dr. Tom Pruit of the Prep School's English Department, has assumed the job of the editor.



Initial wing of monastery in 1958

The summer trip of the Collegium Cantorum

As in the past years, the Abbey's liturgy benefited from the presence of the University's fine choir under the direction of **Marylin Walker**. But this year a number of special features were added. The Holy Week services have been audio and video taped with a plan to use the tapes as promotional material. Then in May, the Collegium Cantorum went on a blitz trip to sing in Cistercian churches of Austria and Hungary. Fathers Ralph March and James Lehrberger traveled with them as chaplains and interpreters. Traveling by

rented bus, they performed within ten days in nine places: five churches in Hungary and in four churches in Austria. In Hungary: St. Emery's church in Budapest, the Church (Basilica) of Zirc, the Basilica of Esztergom, the Cistercian Church in Székesfehérvár, the Abbey and the church of the Cistercian Nuns in Érd. In Austria: in the abbey churches of Heiligenkreuz, Wilhering and Lilienfeld and in the border town of Taden. This destination was their most interesting and memorable stop. It was at this

town that in September of 1950 twenty-two Cistercians crossed the border from Hungary to Austria, nine were arrested and returned while thirteen managed to escape and eventually make their way to America. The choir was received with great cordiality so that the modestly planned commemorative singing in the parish church grew into a full-fledged concert and received a standing ovation.

The Collegium is planning to edit and publish the story of its trip in the form of a short video.

NEWS FROM OVERSEAS . . .

- On Sunday, June 29, in the presence of his community, relatives and friends, **Fr. Gilbert Hardy** celebrated the 50th anniversary of his priesthood. **Fr. Moses Nagy** gave the homily. At the end of the mass **Fr. Gilbert** also spoke. He mentioned it as a special grace that he was able to celebrate this anniversary at the same place where he celebrated his first mass 50 years ago, and in the presence of his first spiritual director and master of novices who first accompanied him to the altar. Indeed, **Fr. Emil Naszályi**, 87, who in the early 40's was the master of novices in Zirc stood by as the first concelebrant.

- **Fr. Roch** spent two weeks in Zirc teaching a mini-course of theology to the six brothers studying there for the priesthood. He came back impressed by the attention and effort he received from his students during the course.

- April 4-11, **Abbot Denis** participated in a regional symposium of abbots and abbesses in the Cistercian monastery of Kismaros, Hungary. This gathering assembled Cistercian superiors from France, Spain, Canada, Switzerland and Hungary. The meeting was held in French. The participants found it so helpful that a similar meeting has already been scheduled for June 15, 1998. May 8-10 the abbot took part in the medieval convention in Kalamazoo, MI and gave a paper on "The Bible in the Early Documents of Cîteaux."

- **Dom Maur Esteva**, the Abbot General of the Cistercian Order convoked a Synod of the Order for September 21, 1997, in the abbey of Poblet, Spain. The Synod consists of the abbot presidents of the various monastic congregations and a few additional members who have been elected at the last General Chapter. **Abbot Denis** is such an elected member.

New library and art center

On June 7, 1997, ground was broken for the construction of the new Library of the Prep School. The library will be located behind the Middle School between the Science Center and the hill leading to the monastery. At the same time work began to transform the old power house into an art center. The space between these building will be furnished with covered walks and landscaped into a sculpture garden for displaying, among others, **Fr. Damian's** outdoor statues of stone, ceramics and bronze. Both the Library and the Art Center will provide indoor space for displaying paintings and sculpture.

Monastery opening: 1958



Standing from left: Fr. Henry, Fr. Ralph, Fr. Odo, Fr. Benedict, Fr. Louis, Fr. Christopher, Fr. Aloysius, Fr. Moses and Fr. George. Seated from left: Fr. Balthasar, Fr. Damian, Abbot General Sighard Kleiner, Bishop Thomas K. Gorman, Abbot Anselm, Fr. Theodosius and Fr. Melchior.

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