

LETTER  
FROM THE ABBOT

*Christmas, 1993*

MAY

THE PRESENCE

OF THE NEWBORN

CHRIST

GUIDE

AND

PROTECT YOU ON OUR JOURNEY

AS WE FOLLOW THE GUIDING STAR

Wishing you a Merry Christmas:

THE COMMUNITY  
OF  
THE CISTERCIAN ABBEY



## EVENTS AND INVITATIONS

Hoping that this Christmas Newsletter reaches you on time, we call your attention the following dates:

### **December 17, Friday**

#### **Christmas Gathering of the Alumni of CPS**

6 PM Basketball Games

9 PM through 12 Midnight Casino Night

### **December 21, Tuesday**

10 AM The School's **Pre-Christmas Mass** in the Abbey Church at 10 AM to be followed by the **Ring Ceremony** of the Juniors in the Gymnasium (at about 11 AM)

### **December 25, Saturday,**

12 midnight: concelebrated **Midnight Mass** in the Abbey Church with Gregorian chant (Monastic Office of Readings begins at 11:45 PM)

9 AM: **High Mass** of the Feast

### **December 31, Saturday, 8 PM through midnight**

Eucharistic Adoration in preparation of New Year.

(8 PM through 9 PM **Holy Hour** with reading and sacred music provided by the *Schola Cantorum of the University of Dallas*.)

## GUIDING NOTES TO THE INSERTED PAGE

It was last Christmas that for the first time we began presenting to our Cistercian Family vignettes from our past: portraits of exceptional personalities from the Abbey's tradition.

Last year we sent you the *Prison Memoirs* of Abbot Wendelin Endrédi, the last Abbot of the Hungarian Cistercians before World War II. He was the one who sent the founders of our monastery to America. Soon after, however, he fell victim to the persecution in the Cold War, first by six years of imprisonment then by lifelong confinement to a home for elderly priests where he lived until his death in 1981.

This year I selected for you from our family album a very different picture: that of István Kaszap, an alumnus of one of the Hungarian Cistercian schools from the 1930's. His portrait shows a very different, but no less inspiring face: that of a 19-year old young man, fighting his fight to grow beyond the usual problems of a high-school boy as he went through a full conversion of heart and life and overcame many obstacles of faults and failures. Meanwhile, he accepted a vocation to the priesthood and religious life. He died eighteen months after his graduation from high school, after his first, very promising and happy year in the novitiate of the Jesuit Order. The last six months of his life show him reaching truly mystical heights by consciously accepting his approaching death as part of Christ's sacrifice for the conversion of sinners, especially of those in their young years. By the publication of his "internal journey," as documented by his diary during of the last five years of his life, his thoughts have touched many lives in his country. Therefore many people started to turn to him as a saint. They began to urge the Church to elevate him to the rank of the saints.

What you read in the presentation of his life is a mere skeleton of the story a young man's "coming of age" in terms of spiritual maturity. To show in what exact sense he was thoroughly an ordinary boy and in what way he was extraordinary, one would need to write a longer essay. Yet I thought to introduce him to the Cistercian Family in Texas in a rather incomplete way and see what "contact" would come about between this inspiring piece of our heritage and the friends of our new home. I believe that even a sketchy image would show him as an authentic model of Christian life (= sanctity), capable of handling and overcoming the handicaps of life while growing up.

A second thought came to me after having completed this short biography. The memory of a saintly young man is a treasure we share with the Jesuit Order. Through the readers of this Newsletter we can, possibly reach the Jesuit community of Dallas and make them aware of something that belongs also to their tradition although they have probably

never heard of this young man. Although Kaszap died "formally" as a layman, he remained in his heart thoroughly devoted to his frustrated Jesuit novitiate which he intended to resume. In his intention, he died as a member of the Society of Jesus. The case of his canonization is in fact entrusted to a Jesuit.

#### *NEWS OF THE ABBEY*

##### *Community Retreat of August*

In the past eleven years, the juniors of the Prep School had a retreat with Fr. Pat Koch SJ. This summer, August 17-20, our community retreat was preached by Fr. Koch who is presently Dean of Studies in Holy Trinity Seminary, just across the street from the Abbey.

##### *Assignments Abroad*

For the school year 1993-94, the actual membership of the community has decreased because of two by temporary assignments to work abroad.

Fr. Benedict Monostori, retired professor of Physics of the University of Dallas, accepted an invitation to spend a year in Pécs, Hungary, in a recently re-established Cistercian School. He is teaching Religion and participates in the various activities of the school's Science Club.

Fr. James Lehrberger is teaching philosophy and is the chaplain of the Rome Campus of the University of Dallas for the entire year. Just recently, the University has asked for an extension of his appointment by another year as the UD Rome Campus plans to move into brand-new facilities next summer.

##### *Mass for UD Students*

Now for the fourth consecutive year, on Oct. 3, the Abbey invited to the students of the University of Dallas for a special Sunday Mass at the Abbey and a reception honoring the new freshmen.

A special feature was, this time, the participation of the University's choir, the "Schola Cantorum" under the direction of Mrs. Marilyn Walker, mother of Cistercian alumnus Bob Walker ('81). The combination of Gregorian Chant performed by the choir of the monks and the classical polyphony sung by the "Schola Cantorum" made this evening mass glow with special beauty, reverence and intimacy. The "a cappella" performance of music (i.e., with no instrumental accompaniment) by its exclusive reliance on the human voice music seems to be especially fitting to the size and acoustics of our new Church. About 300 people attended.

##### *The Holy Hour Planned on New Year's Eve*

As last year, on New Year's Eve the community of the Abbey plans to have the Blessed Sacrament exposed from 8 PM until midnight. The first hour of adoration is planned to be in the form of a "Holy Hour" during which readings from the pulpit and sacred music by the "Schola Cantorum of the University" would alternate. All participants will receive a copy of the program with texts printed.

##### *Canonical Visitation and Abbatial Election Slated*

According to the Abbey's Constitution, the monastery must undergo an official visitation once every three years. Since the term of the abbot is of six years at every other canonical visitation a new abbatial election must take place. The last abbatial election was on April 4, 1988. Thus the next visitation of the monastery, slated for Spring 1994, will be connected with a new abbatial election. The visitation and the election are expected to take place some time in late February. The visitor will be our Abbot General, Polycarp Zakar, residing in Rome.

### *Cistercian Life in Hungary*

In Hungary, the revitalization of all religious Orders is progressing much too slowly and encounters many difficulties and obstacles. The larger part of the Cistercian monks still live in dispersion, mainly because our monasteries have not yet been returned to us from their previous use by the State and its local agencies.

Meanwhile on August 30, in the monastery of Zirc two new novices took the habit and two novices made their first vows. Under the present circumstances the education of the new members still cannot be organized in a satisfactory way. Presently, in Zirc eleven monks live in crowded conditions. Of these, six are elderly and five are in their twenties, still in training. Five other young monks are studying in Rome and one in Budapest.

State authorities have recently officially acknowledged the Cistercian Order's proprietorship of the entire Abbey of Zirc and made a list of stipulations specifying when and how different buildings will be returned to the monks. The next official deadline for the return of a major part of the buildings is June 15, 1994.

In Spring of 1994 there will be parliamentary elections in Hungary. Much of the future developments will depend on the outcome of the election and the character of the new government.

Good news has reached us from the two communities of Cistercian Nuns that are successfully building their future. Both communities managed to obtain resources to construct new living quarters and pull together most of their scattered membership. The dedication of the monastery "Regina Mundi" at a short distance from Budapest took place in September, while the building of "Monastery of Our Lady of the Annunciation" is near completion. Both communities have several young postulants and novices.

### *Publications*

A national theological magazine, *Communio* published an article by Fr. Roch Kereszty on the theology of the Church in the writings of St. Bernard, under the title "Bride" and Mother in St. Bernard's *super Cantica: An Ecclesiology for Our Times?* Fr. Roch called attention to the medieval use of a biblical imagery in describing the functions of the Church, and thus casting light on the "feminine" aspects of the Church in its role and service.

To summarize the Cistercian experience in secondary education in Texas, I have ventured a longer article in Hungarian about the Cistercian Preparatory School. I wrote the article with two purposes in mind. First, I wanted to communicate to people in Hungary how the Cistercian educational system which had been so successful there but was destroyed by the communist era has come to new life in Texas. Second, I wanted to show how many adjustments and transformations you need to make - and how much time and effort it takes - if you want to put new life into an old institution under changed circumstances. This problem is being faced today in Hungary by all Catholic schools.

As a third - somewhat remote - goal, the article was written as a first effort at summarizing the history of the Cistercian Preparatory School which needs to be completed on a fuller scale and in English within the next five years. The Hungarian article about CPS was written in response to repeated requests and was published in a professional magazine that specializes in secondary education.

The *Rostrum*, a journal published by the University of Dallas for the sake of intellectual exchange among its various departments and institutes, printed an article by Br. Edmund Douglas, the youngest member of our community, presently a senior at UD, with the title "Humility as an Intellectual Virtue."

### *Urgent Request for Prayer*

On Sunday, November 14, Fr. George Ferenczy was involved in a car accident. His lung was injured. For almost two weeks he was on a respirator. He is still in the Irving City Hospital. With the help of your prayer we hope that by the time this text reaches you he will be back in the monastery and on his way to a full recovery.