

SAINT JOHN'S ABBEY

BOX 2015

COLLEGEVILLE, MINNESOTA 56321-2015

OFFICE OF THE ABBOT

April, 2002

Dear Confrere:

A blessed and joy-filled Easter season to you! Our Triduum celebration is always a testimony to the truism that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts and our daily realization of the blessing of talent that we have in the community. Our Holy Week liturgies are truly the "work of the community," so deeply do they draw on the reservoir of talent and good will in the community.

Our Church continues to be rocked by the fallout from the way in which sexual abuse cases have been handled in the recent and the remote past. A measure of the intensity of the scandal is its front-page status in publications such as *Newsweek*, *Time* and *US News and World Report*. It is not helpful to lambast and complain about the news coverage. If the abuse had not happened, the news media would be focusing on March Madness (basketball) or the beginning of the baseball season. In all of this we need to make sure that we keep our eyes and ears focused on the victims of sexual abuse, for whom the suffering is real and relentless. There is no indication that this scandal will cool quickly. The consequences for the Church are devastating, of course. The faith of many good and generous Catholics is being shaken and it will take many years of hard work to restore confidence in Church leadership.

We have known our own pain and devastation with sexual abuse cases. We have no guarantees that new cases will not emerge at this time. However, Father *Rene McGraw* and I visited with our lawyer Mr. Robert Stich to evaluate the relative risk of each of the past cases. One of the major issues in this current crisis is the re-appointment of men to ministry after treatment. The key issue here is monitoring the ministerial situations and ensuring good communication. We are reviewing our sexual abuse policy to ensure that it reflects the insights gained over the past years. In addition, we are reviewing our web site to make it more user-friendly to those who need to know our policy or to contact an advocate or me.

I think that it is very important for us to resist the facile connections between pedophilia and homosexuality (there isn't one); pedophilia and celibacy (there isn't one); pedophilia and maleness (there isn't one); pedophilia and priesthood (there isn't one). Pedophilia cuts across all of these dividing lines, afflicting married men and women, heterosexuals and homosexuals, as well as people in the helping and other professions. There is a significant difference

between a pedophile and ephebophile. The former is attracted to pre-pubescent children (11-12 year old or less). The latter is attracted to teenagers (13-18 years old). Experts say that there is little chance for successful treatment of a pedophile and a very good chance for successful treatment for an ephebophile.

I am sure that you have experienced the full range of emotions over the past month, as each day brought a new story. We can help each other enormously by simply talking to each other about our concerns; by being aware and sensitive to those in our community who have abused and those who have been abused; by reading thoughtful articles in the recent *America* magazine and the *New York Times*. As a community we need to understand as much as possible about the needs of our Church and our own responsibility for the future of the Church.

Recently the Conference of Major Superiors of Men and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious joined together for the Image Project Study. Father *Joseph Feders* has written at length in this month's *Confrere* on the study. I take this opportunity to affirm the need for attracting young men to monastic life. We need to live our vocation with the greatest integrity and be willing to share the meaning and motivation for this life together. We need to be aware of those ways in which we unwittingly undermine the clarity and significance of our monastic witness.

From March 3-5 I attended a "Critical Personnel Issues" Conference in Washington, DC, that was co-sponsored by Southdown Institute and Saint Luke's Institute. There were about 150 participants and there were nine separate workshops on a range of issues that emerge in working with people in religious life. I was also able to meet with Father *Anthony Ruff* and his team for a conversation and assessment of program goals for Anthony.

On March 11, Father William and I traveled to New Ulm to visit with Bishop John Nienstedt, who was installed on August 6, 2001. We had a good conversation that focused on the needs of the Church in the New Ulm diocese and possible connections to the School of Theology in the future.

On March 19th the Chapter met for the first of a series of meetings to consider a proposal from the "Collegeville Development Group" to build retirement housing adjacent to St. John's campus. The CDG, formed by St. John's graduates Chris Schellinger (SJP '87 & SJU '92) and Jon Petters (SJU '75), proposes that St. John's buy 100 acres of land from the Philippi's, whose farm lies just west of Flynntown. The CDG would provide half the funding (\$500,000) and build about 45 houses on 10 to 15 acres of land. The remainder of the land would remain undeveloped and would be gifted to Saint John's. Many issues remain to be discussed and decided on: for example, ownership of the land on which the housing is built; extending water and waste water treatment; transportation and parking; the consistency of such a project with our image and mission; what will happen to this land if we decide not to buy it; etc. Our preference would be that our neighbors continue to farm the fields and preserve

the forests that adjoin our property. But if the alternative is small lot housing, convenience stores, and sub-divisions, that is, the kind of development we see in the neighboring townships of St. Joseph and Waite Park, we would like to actively participate in a project that preserves the land base while providing housing for people who would be interested in living near the abbey and the university and contributing to our life and work.

Brother *Paul Richards* is busy preparing for AmericaFest, a weeklong international festival for men and boys choirs that will be held here from July 30th to August 5th. This is the fourth time the St. John's Boys' Choir will host the event. Well over 700 men and boy singers from five countries (Australia, The Czech Republic Canada, Latvia, and Finland) and ten states will participate. The purpose of the festival - the largest of its kind in the world - is to promote international understanding through the sharing of choral music. Each evening there will be a concert open to the public (free admission for monks). This summer's festival will include a component called "Raising Gentle Men," aimed at heightening issues related to the emotional/social and psychological development of raising gifted young men.

The Prep School's delightful and stunning production of the Lloyd Webber musical "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," directed by Brother *Paul-Vincent Niebauer*, ended its run on March 24. All eight public performances were sold out, and a total audience of 1400 enjoyed the show. Joining the 89 students in this production was Prep School President, Father *Gordon Tavis*, who returned to the stage after a 60-year hiatus in the role of Jacob. When his sister learned about the role he was to take, she remarked, "Hmmm, from President to Patriarch; not too shabby."

During March the floor in our refectory received a major overhaul. The work was done by a process developed by Apeiron. The company was started by Tim Riviere and his brother Christopher. They are both graduates of the Prep School and they deal with the polishing of stone and its maintenance. This was the first time that they polished a terrazzo floor. The process, after the old wax and finish had been removed, consisted of grinding the floor smooth with the usual diamond pads and water. The polishing process consisted of a chemical, developed by Tim, a fine pumice grit all agitated by a buffer. The polished stone is impregnated with a sealer to prevent it from being stained by the likes of coffee, tomato juice, etc. There is no wax or finish coating on top of the stone. As the stone scuffs from usage, it can be brightened by buffing it. The daily upkeep involves simply sweeping and washing. The polishing process cost \$9,000. However, Tim made a donation to his alma mater of \$4,900. This brought the price tag down to \$4,100 for the Refectory. This investment will eliminate the waxing which never seemed to last.

This week witnesses the completion of the renovation activity in the south corridor of the first floor of the quadrangle. The university president, the provost, the dean of the college, and their respective staffs, will move into their renovated quarters this week. Likewise, the monastery's Guest Dining Room returns to its

former location at the southwest corner of the quad – having been temporarily housed in the former chapter room. Occupants in the west wing of the quadrangle will be vacated into the Annex Building over the next two weeks (when registration is completed) to make ready for renovation of that last portion of first quadrangle.

In addition, contracts have recently been signed to move forward with the re-roofing of the Great Hall this summer, and the monastery's portion of the quad in Summer of 2003.

The Saint John's Abbey Fire Department is one of the rapidly evolving services on the campus. Since Brother *John Anderl* founded the department in the 1930s, the complexity and size of our campus and the technologies for fighting fires have changed dramatically. Over the past years monks in formation have expressed concerns about the way in which the monastery staffs the Fire Department and the demands that are being placed on community members. We have taken a number of steps to respond to these concerns. Last August, we hired a new full-time fire chief, Mr. Jay Bohan. Jay came to Saint John's with nineteen years of experience, most recently as a fire inspector in the Twin Cities. In addition, after doing a very successful trial with two undergraduate students on the Fire Department last year, six students are working with the department this year. They are required to have Fire Training I, a course of study that includes 35 hours of in-class training and the reading of about 1000 pages of technical material. Saint John's Physical Plant hired Pinkerton to clean and test each smoke detector on campus annually to minimize false alarms. Finally, teams of first responders have been formed so that a smaller group is on call for a week at a time to handle alarms during the evening and night hours. I am very grateful to all community members who serve the entire Saint John's community by being on the Fire Department.

In discussing the Maple Syrup Season with Br. Walter earlier this winter, we decided that John Geissler of the Arboretum and Steve Saupe of the Biology Department would coordinate the project this year. Br. Walter has helped to set up and will be the main consultant for this year. This year the Abbey will get all the syrup, but shares will be worked out in the future.

On March 3rd students from Saint Cloud Tech assisted in putting out about 600 taps, which is about ½ the normal number. We are reducing the number so that we can use pails for sap collection. We are hoping that there will be a lot of frustrated squirrels this year! John and Steve are arranging for helpers to collect sap when it starts to run. This is a process that will be in evolution for a few years, as we finetune the way that this relates to the undergraduate curriculum.

Father *Magnus Wenninger* showcased a collection of his polyhedrons at the Heritage Center at Saint Benedict's Monastery from February 24 through March 28. In addition, an eighteen-minute biographical documentary of Father

Magnus and his developing interest in polyhedrons, entitled "Order in Chaos", was premiered on March 18 in the Pellegrine Auditorium. This excellent video was prepared by two Saint John's University senior communications majors.

Father *Landelin Robling*, with the assistance of Mr. John Sundet in Information Technology in the University, has developed a database program that includes all the monks in the monastery. In addition, he has entered all of the data about education, work experiences, and interests for the future that the community supplied over the past months. Brother *Otto Thole* joins the Senior Council as a replacement for Father *James Tingerthal* since he has journeyed to Saint Leo Abbey. Jim was an appointed Senior Councilor – hence no need for an election.

Dates to remember:

April 12, 2002 This is Saint John's Day Celebration on which all of the donors for Saint John's are recognized.

April 19, 2002 Father *Angelo Zankl* will celebrate his 101st birthday.

April 24, 2002 The second Breuer lecture will be given by **John Wesley Cook**: "*The Language of American Religious Architects: The Breuer Generation.*" Cook is president of The Henry Luce Foundation and he was the director of the Religion and Arts Program at Yale.

May 22, 2002. Breuer Centennial Exhibit Opening -- The exhibit at Saint John's Art Gallery will feature Breuer's photos, models, drawings and furniture.
May 30 – June 2 Hamm Clinic Conference on Spirituality and the Arts. Father Roger Kasprick is the contact person for this, which the Hamm Foundation sees as a child of the Mental Health Institute. It is intended for clergy, pastoral workers, and spiritual directors.

June 2, 2002 Community Retreat -- The community retreat this year will begin with a haustus and buffet supper on Sunday evening, June 2. Monday, June 3, will be devoted to a "State of the Abbey" Presentation, a review of what has been accomplished in the past year and goals for the next year. The focus will be on the Abbey. The retreat will begin with a conference on Monday evening, with Abbot Jerome Kodell, OSB, from Subiaco Abbey.

June 20-23, 2002. Breuer Architectural Symposium -- This symposium, planned in cooperation with the Minnesota chapter and American Institute of Architects, will include the posthumous presentation of the *Colman J. Barry Award for Distinguished Contributions to Religion and Society* to Marcel Breuer. The annual award honors Fr. Colman Barry OSB, the eighth president of Saint John's University.

June 30 – July 4 Monastic Institute -- Cross Generational Issues in Monastic Life Today – Fr. Bede Healey from Big Sur, Abbot Thomas Frerking from St. Louis Abbey, Fr. Columba Stewart, and Margaret Michaud, Prioress of St. Bede Monastery will be the presenters.

Remember the sick and infirm. Father *Stephen Wagman* recently received the bad news that the cancer he has struggled with mightily for the past six years, has spread to his liver. The doctors at Mayo say that treatment is really useless at this point and that Steve has 6-9 months to live. Brother *Mark Kelly* is at Hazelden for treatment for alcohol abuse. Father *Donald Tauscher* and I visited Mark on Easter Sunday and he is doing well. Father *Anthony Ruff* is in the last stage of his in-patient treatment at Saint Luke's Institute. Brother *Edward Vebelun* was visiting his family and tore a ligament in his knee. So much of his visit to Saint John's was spent in serious pain and physical therapy after surgery. Eddie returned to Fujimi and then to Tokyo, where he continues to study theology towards ordination.

Important change: E-mail continues to occupy chunks of my time. If I am attending to business with each of you, that is just fine. However, lots of other stuff comes through as well and I want to transfer responsibility for this other stuff to Father William Skudlarek. So, beginning immediately, I am establishing a new e-mail account for you as community. The e-mail address is jbk@csbsju.edu and is for my eyes only. Anything you send to jklassen@csbsju.edu will be accessed by Father William.

Blessings and peace,



Abbot John Klassen, OSB