



# Benet Lake News

St. Benedict's Abbey

Benet Lake, Wisconsin 53102

Spring, 2005 - vol. 38 no. 3

## 60 YEARS AND STILL GROWING...

*The call of God is not static.  
It is alive with possibilities!*

St. Benedict's Abbey celebrates its 60th anniversary of foundation on **March 21, 2005**. The life and ministry of the monks here at St. Benedict's Abbey must keep pace with the changing needs of society in order to render service in the name of the Gospel. The call of God is not static. It is alive with possibilities. Trying hard to listen to this call we the monks of Benet Lake have chosen to move forward with a three phased construction project to meet future ministry needs and to accommodate liturgical practices. Here is a brief outline of the project:

- 1) **Gathering space added to the Abbey Church;**
- 2) **New Entrance and Handicapped Accessible Facilities and;**
- 3) **Remodeling of first floor North wing of the present Abbey**

Along with a planned addition to the Abbey Church is a re-construction of the entrance and original road to the Abbey. This is a major construction effort because of the need to supply proper water drainage and adequate care of landscape. It will also provide additional parking and enhanced lighting for our guests and meet requirements for improved handicapped access.

This new entrance will give a more prominent approach to the Abbey, the Church and to our Retreat Facility. The additional gathering space will be a place to welcome our guests and gather for liturgical functions that are held in the Abbey Church. Again, better handicapped access to the Church and Retreat Facility are a key aspect of this project.

Remodeling of the first floor of the North wing of the present Abbey will provide needed rooms to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation, rooms for spiritual direction and parlors to receive guests. The present book store will also get a new look.

Progress on this project is going forward. This is a major financial project for us. Our best estimate of the completion of this project is for late July 2005.

Keeping you our friends informed and inviting you to share in our prayer and ministry is important to us. You are important to us! We count on your prayers and your generous financial assistance. Trusting in the call of God we respond in faith and in joyful hope! We look forward to many more years of ora et labora (prayer and work). **Thank you God for these past 60 years!**



Site of Future Gathering Space for Abbey Church



Abbey Construction



New Entrance &  
Handicapped Parking



Remodeling North Wing of Abbey

# Claustral Oblate



Upon completing the postulant and novitiate programs, Robert Green was presented by Prior Henry Nurre, O.S.B., for profession as a Claustral Oblate. The feast of St. Scholastica, February 10, 2005, was the occasion for Brother Robert (Bob) Green to make his promise of obedience as a Claustral Oblate before Abbot Edmund Boyce, O.S.B. in the Abbey Church in the presence of the monks.

Brother Bob was born in Toledo, Ohio and says he lived most of his life "on the road." It was while working as a concert sound engineer that he began to experience the call of God to try the monastic religious life.

A claustral oblate desires to lead an enriched Christian life according to the Gospel as reflected in the Rule of St. Benedict. In this way they share in the spiritual benefits of the sons and daughters of St. Benedict who are committed to the monastic life by public vows. By integrating prayer and work they manifest Christ's presence in the world.

Along with his commitment to the monastic office and private prayer and reading, he serves as part of the food service team that offer hospitality to the many retreatants that come to the Abbey each year. Each day Brother cares for the needs of the abbey church as the sacristan.

He also enjoys the outdoors and works closely with Brother Vincent keeping the grounds looking good.

Brother Bob we are grateful for your presence with us and we thank you for your willingness to make your oblation as a claustral oblate here at Benet Lake. God bless you!



*Jesus rose from the dead  
early on the  
first day of the week.*

*He first appeared to  
Mary Magdalene,  
out of whom He had  
cast seven demons.*

*She went to announce  
the good news to His followers,  
who were now  
grieving and weeping.*

*(Mark 16:9-10)*

*\* Alleluia \* Alleluia \*  
He is Risen!*

# Prayer in the Monastic Day

Saint Benedict in his Rule for Monasteries says, "We believe the Divine Presence is everywhere....Especially do we hold this to be true when we are assisting at the Work of God." By the Work of God he refers to the public liturgical prayer which the monks recite as a community. It has always been an essential part of the Benedictine life to gather together to praise God by chant and song both in the Divine Office and Mass.

As times have changed, the structure of the liturgy has also changed. One thing remains constant, however, and it is the centrality of daily prayer in the life of a monk. Benedict wished to insure that those who would follow his Rule would never lose sight of the importance of this activity. "Let nothing be preferred to the Work of God." Monks are engaged in many different tasks, some of which may take them away from the monastery. Nonetheless the rhythm of monastic life is punctuated with prayer. And for those who are away from the monastery every period of prayer concludes with the intercession for our brothers who are away.



Every day the world over the chants are sung by monks at the canonical hours, the public service of praise and worship that takes place at appointed times each day. Chant speaks to our hearts because it is a universal call to enter the now: to stop, to listen, and to heed God's message of this moment.

Here at Benet Lake the monastic day begins with the abbey church bells calling us to Vigils. The bell wakes us to the now and calls us to do what it is time for. It calls us to Vigils a time where we learn to wait in silence, to listen to the Word of God in the scripture and learn to live in joyful hope for the second coming of Christ.

The monastic hour of Lauds takes us out of the darkness, into the light. At Lauds the morning prayer of the church, we receive the new day as a gift at sunrise. In the psalms and Scripture readings we are called to respond with a grateful heart and to renew our lives of praise as well as to raise in petition our daily needs.

At noon the Angelus bells call us to stop and recall the Incarnation—God with us! Shortly after this bell the community comes together; we are called to leave what we are doing and respond anew to this opportunity to express our wonder at God's greatness and goodness.

At five o'clock we celebrate Mass. It is here that we celebrate the mystery of God's unconditional love for us. Of ourselves we could not participate in this saving event. Yet thanks to the

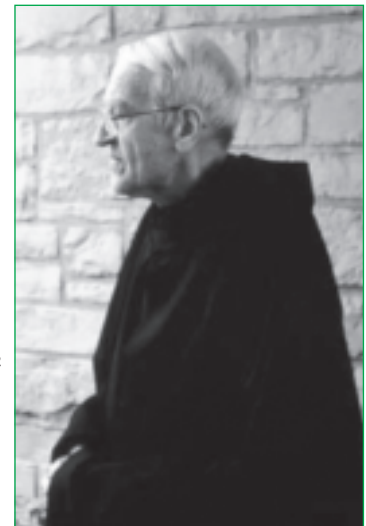


gracious gift of Christ in his paschal mystery, all are called to full, conscious and active participation: "through Him, with Him and in Him." Each one of us is called to place our very selves in all our brokenness on the paten. The bread and wine then become symbolic of the sacrifice of self, of the entrance into the saving mystery of dying and rising through, with and in Christ.

Shortly following the Mass we continue our liturgy with the Liturgical hour of Vespers the evening prayer of the church. We come from a day of work having celebrated the Eucharist as darkness descends upon the Abbey. It is the hour of peace of heart and serenity. The high point of Vespers is the chanting of the Magnificat, the words of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth. "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior..." It is our prayer and hope that these very words become our way of life, that they create in us and call us to respond in silence and singleness of heart.

The last of the canonical hours is called Compline, the night prayer of the Church. It was originally prayed in private by each monk before he went to bed; but over the years this prayer has been prayed in community. In Compline we close the day, we acknowledge our faults and resolve to begin again. Father Abbot closes this day of prayer asking that we have restful sleep and a peaceful death. Finally, we gather before the icon of our Blessed Mother Mary where we sing to her asking her to intercede for us until again we hear the bell of Vigils calling us to respond again to another day of grace.

Each day many of you write to us, asking for prayers. We get many requests to pray for the sick, those in the military, the victims of the Tsunami and many other needs too many to list here. Your needs become our concern. **We do not pray instead of you but we pray with you.** We join our prayer with yours in asking the saints especially St. Benedict to present your needs, and the needs of people all over the world as well as our needs, hopes and dreams to our Father. In praying for one another we are joined in the spiritual unity which was Christ's desire for us..."Father, I pray that they may be one as we are one." (John 17:21).



- **Abbot Edmund Boyce** has appointed **Father Lawrence Fedor** as archivist for the Abbey. **Father Larry** also has been working with **Prior Henry Nurre** and **Brothers Vincent Wedig** and **Bob Green** on snow removal. This year we have had an exceptionally large amount of snow. The unofficial snow fall is approximately 30-35 inches.

- **Brother Michael O'Brien**, recently earned a Master's degree in counseling psychology from Marquette University at Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Presently he is completing the required hours of supervision to be granted a license to practice his new skills. Brother is a man of many talents; he is an accomplished organist and concert harpist. CONGRATULATIONS!

- Congratulations to **Brother Patrick Shea** who marked his 25th anniversary of monastic profession. God bless you Br. Patrick!

- On the move...**Abbot Edmund** has been kept busy with representing the Abbey at the Abbot's Congress in Rome. His duties have also taken him to St. Meinrad Archabbey in southern Indiana for the blessing of their new Archabbot. And most recently he attended the annual Abbot's workshop at Prince of Peace Abbey at Oceanside, CA.

- August 20, 2004, **Brothers Isidro Ramos, Stephen Lattner** and **Donald Gibbs** were admitted to the ministry of Acolyte by **Abbot Edmund**.

- The monks of the abbey hosted their annual Christmas appreciation dinner for the employees, volunteers, their families and guests. **Abbot Edmund** spoke of the importance of each person for the Abbey community and thanked each and all for the service they render to make St. Benedict's a place of welcome and hospitality.

- The hard work of the retreat center staff is proving a benefit...the retreat center calendar continues to fill up. This new year we will host additional youth ministry programs as well as provide for the many guests who have used our facilities before.

- Father Albert Meyer, O.S.B., one of the early monks of Benet Lake, was our guest for a few days. He is a monk of the Monastery of the Risen Christ at San Luis Obispo, CA. It was good to renew old friendships—please return soon!

- The Abbey Lake was host to the annual Shangrila ice fishing derby on the

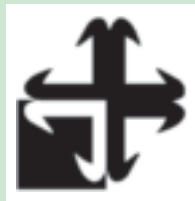
## Comings and goings

weekend of February 5 & 6. The Abbey Lake is a fun place for the Kairos Youth Retreat groups who meet here at the retreat center during the winter months. The Abbey property is truly a place and an opportunity for the whole of creation to resound with the praise of God!



- The Knights of Columbus of West Allison held its annual clergy appreciation night and **Fathers Larry Fedor** and **Kevin Murphy** represented the Abbey. There was a short program outlining details of a recent trip to Rome by some of the seminarians of the Archdiocese. The occasion for this trip was the reception of the Pallium by Milwaukee Archbishop Timothy Dolan.

The Monks of  
**ST. BENEDICT'S ABBEY**  
welcome men who want to seek  
God in the Benedictine tradition.



• Prayer • Work • Lectio

In a contemplative community

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## First Snow for Brother Nico!



Brother Nicodemus Ndamo, O.S.B., from Hanga, Tanzania, East Africa, arrived at Benet Lake to begin his study of English and learn computer technology. The national language in Tanzania is Swahili. Brother is attending the "English as a Second Language Program" at Sacred Heart School of Theology. After mastering the English language, he will get some technical and practical know-how in using computers. The home Abbey of Brother Nicodemus is under the patronage of Sts Maurus and Placidus and was founded in 1957. This abbey now has seven dependent houses. There are presently 140 monks in the community. They are blessed with youth and a growing number of vocations.

You can see from the smile on Brothers face that he enjoyed his first snow fall. We have assured him that the snow will continue here in Wisconsin. He has yet to build his first snowman or make a snow angel...all in good time!

We thank Abbot Tadeo for sending Brother Nicodemus to be with us for his period of study. We hope Abbot Tadeo will make plans to visit Brother (in the warmer summer months) and also share our hospitality. **WELCOME Brother Nicodemus!**

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