

MONKS IN THE CITY

100 YEARS

1922-2022

The story of the Benedictine Monks of Cleveland, Ohio of Saint Andrew Abbey



CENTENNIAL BANQUET

AT EMBASSY SUITES

4:45 – 5:30 PM ARRIVAL AND RECEPTION

5:30 PM NATIONAL ANTHEM

played by Johnny Pecon Band – all sing

Slovak National Anthem – Fr. Michael / Introduction of the Master of Ceremonies

WELCOME BY THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Honorable Tom Perciak

1966 BHS alumnus and Mayor of the City of Strongsville, Ohio

INTRODUCTION OF BISHOP EDWARD MALESIC

who will give the invocation

5:45 PM DINNER

with strolling music

6:45 PM INTRODUCTION OF DIGNITARIES PRESENT

by Mayor Perciak

6:55 PM TESTIMONIALS CALLED TO OFFER COMMENTS

by Mayor Perciak

On behalf of the Benedictine Order – Abbot President Jonathan Licari, OSB

On behalf of St. Procopius Abbey – Abbot Austin Murphy, OSB

On behalf of the Diocese – Fr. Jack Carlin, pastor of St. Charles Borromeo, Parma, Ohio

On behalf of Benedictine High School – Mr. Ryan Ryzner, President

On behalf of the Civic Community – Honorable Ben Holbert

1977 BHS alumnus and Mayor of the Village of Woodmere, Ohio

On behalf of the Slovak Fraternals:

Fr. Andrew Hvozdovic – President Slovak Catholic Federation

Andrew Rajec – President of the First Catholic Slovak Union

Cynthia Maleski – President of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association

Mary Jo Savidge – Secretary-Treasurer of the Ladies Pennsylvania Slovak Catholic Union

Michael Horvath – President of the Slovak Catholic Sokol

7:40 PM INTRODUCTION OF THE VIDEO – FR. MICHAEL

7:45 PM RESPONSE AND APPRECIATION – ABBOT GARY

8:00 PM CLOSING PRAYER

Sister Barbara Sable, SSCM

Superior of the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Danville, Pennsylvania

ULTIMA THE MONKS OF ST. ANDREW ABBEY

September 18, 2022

We, the Monks of St. Andrew Abbey, believe in our Hallmarks of...
**PRAYER & WORSHIP, OBEDIENCE & HUMILITY,
WORK & DISCIPLINE, STEWARDSHIP, COMMUNITY &
STABILITY, HOSPITALITY & CHARITY, CONVERSATION.**

Dear Friends of our Benedictine Community,

We come together today to pray and celebrate 100 years of St. Andrew Abbey! We are honored and privileged to welcome all of you to this special anniversary year.

The Benedictine monks of St. Andrew Abbey personally thank you for letting God work His miracle through you in helping us to touch countless lives since 1922. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

A special thank you goes out to the Abbey Centennial Committee for their diligent hard work in putting this event together. Our volunteers always make this event a true success.

May the love, peace and blessings of God be with you and your families throughout your life. Enjoy this day of celebration.

PEACE,



Abbot Gary, OSB

This commemorative booklet is dedicated in gratitude to the 73 deceased monks whose many years of prayer and work built the community of Saint Andrew Abbey that we know today.

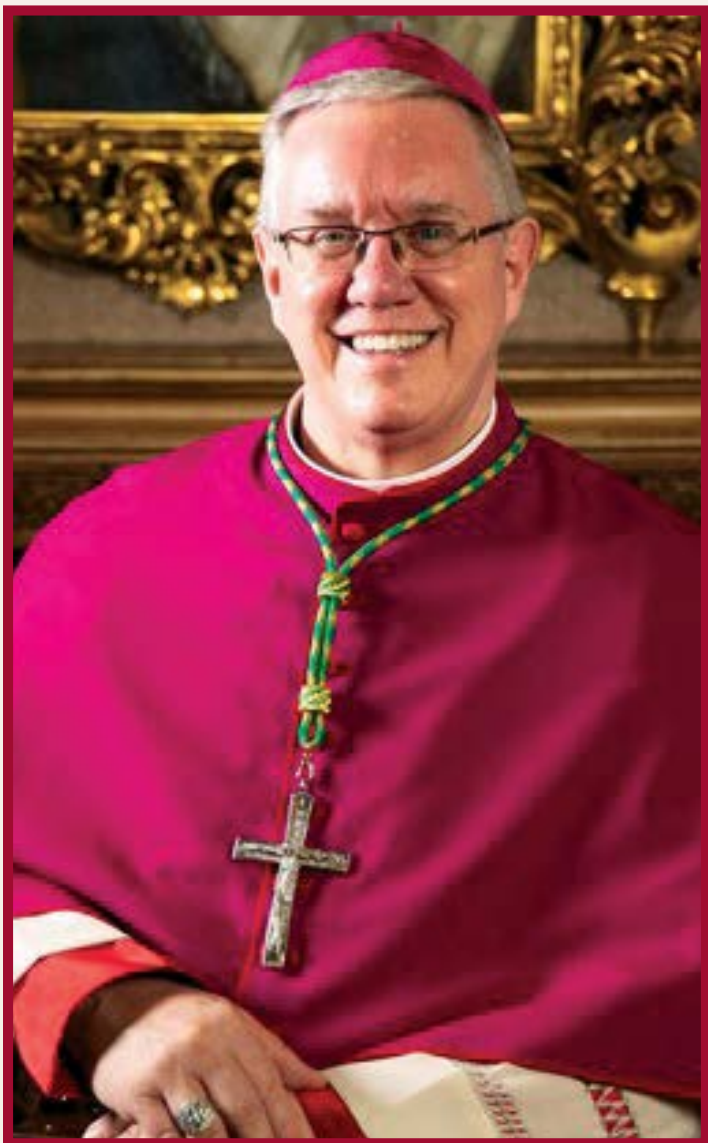




We offer prayers for **Pope Francis, the Successor of Saint Peter the Apostle**. May the Lord grant him good health and wisdom as he continues to shepherd the Holy Catholic Church in the eighth year of his pontificate.

We also offer prayers for the repose of the soul of the late **Cardinal Jozef Tomko**, who died on August 21, 2022, at the venerable age of 98. He was the oldest member of the College of Cardinals, a loyal son of the Church, a true Slovak patriot, and a good friend of Saint Andrew Svorad Abbey. (Photo taken when Pope Francis visited Slovakia in 2021)

**Bishop Edward
C. Malesic**
BISHOP OF CLEVELAND

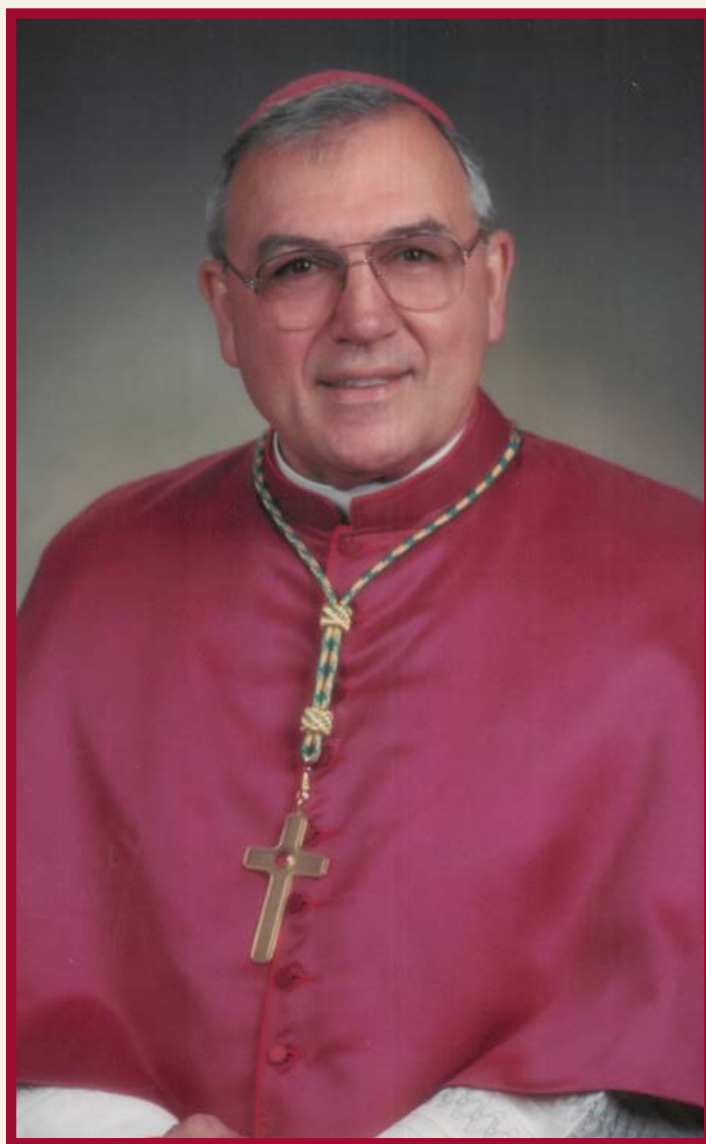


Bishop Michael Woost

AUXILIARY BISHOP OF THE
DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND

Bishop Roger Gries, OSB

AUXILIARY BISHOP EMERITUS
OF THE DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND





Abbot President-Elect Jonathan Licari, OSB

(RIGHT) OF THE
AMERICAN CASSINESE
CONGREGATION WITH
Bishop Elias Lorenzo, OSB
(LEFT) OF NEWARK, NEW
JERSEY, FORMER ABBOT
PRESIDENT



**Abbot Primate
Gregory Polan, OSB**
ROME

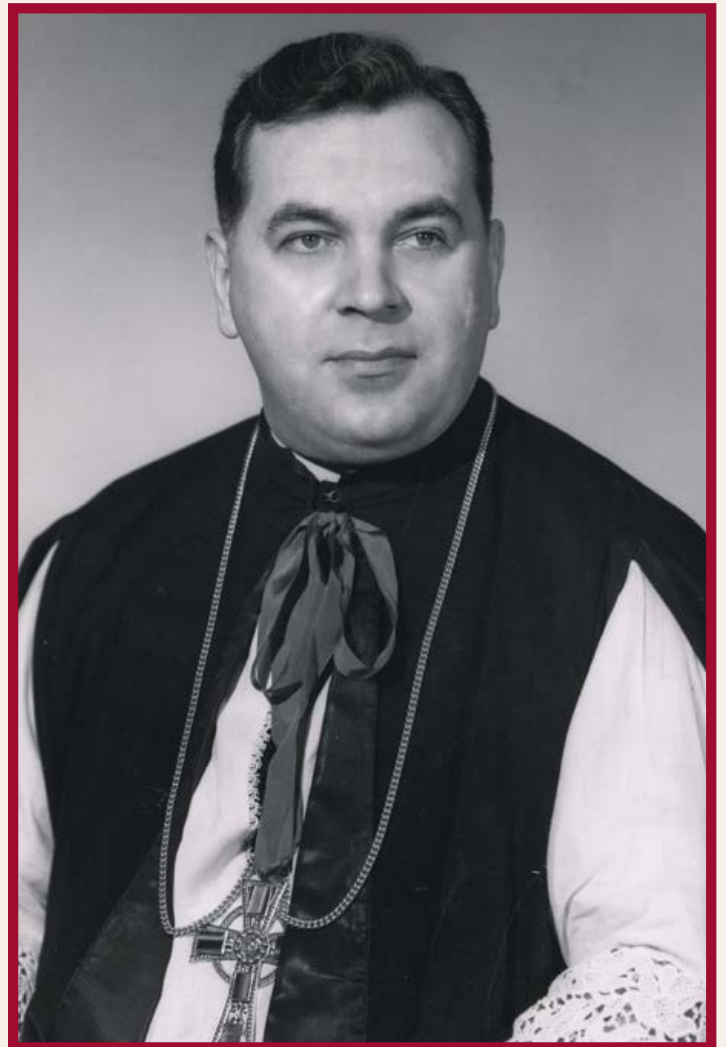


Abbot Austin Murphy, OSB
ST. PROCOPIUS ABBEY
LISLE, ILLINOIS
FROM WHERE THE FIRST MONKS WERE
SENT TO CLEVELAND IN 1922



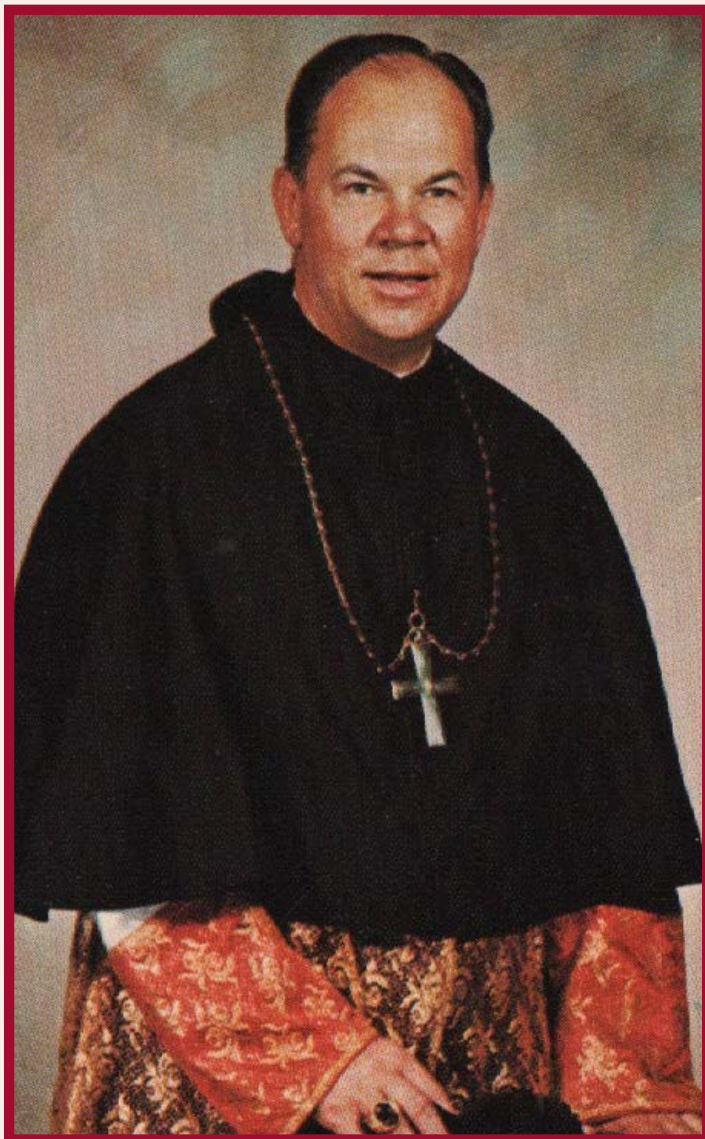
**Abbot Stanislaus
Gmuca, OSB**

FIRST ABBOT OF SAINT ANDREW ABBEY
1934-1946



Abbot Theodore Kojis, OSB

SECOND ABBOT OF SAINT ANDREW ABBEY
1946-1966

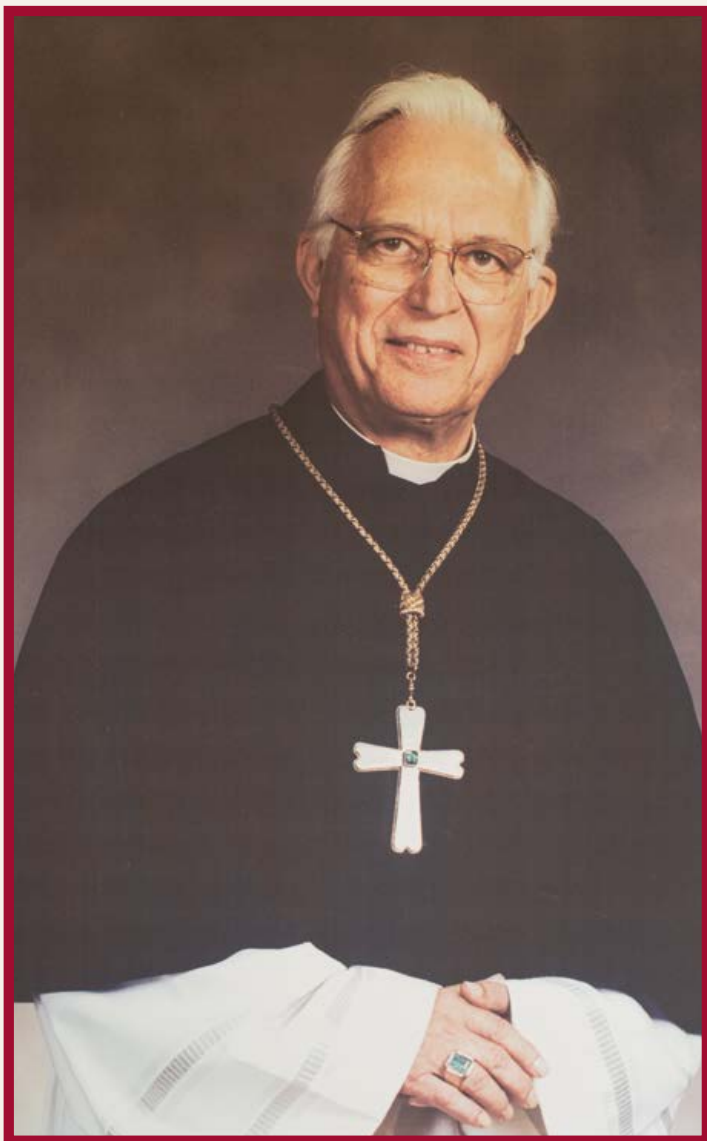


Abbot Jerome Koval, OSB

THIRD ABBOT OF SAINT ANDREW ABBEY
1966-1981

Abbot Roger Gries, OSB

FOURTH ABBOT OF
SAINT ANDREW ABBEY
1981-2001



**Abbot Clement
Zeleznik, OSB**

FIFTH ABBOT OF SAINT ANDREW ABBEY
2001-2008



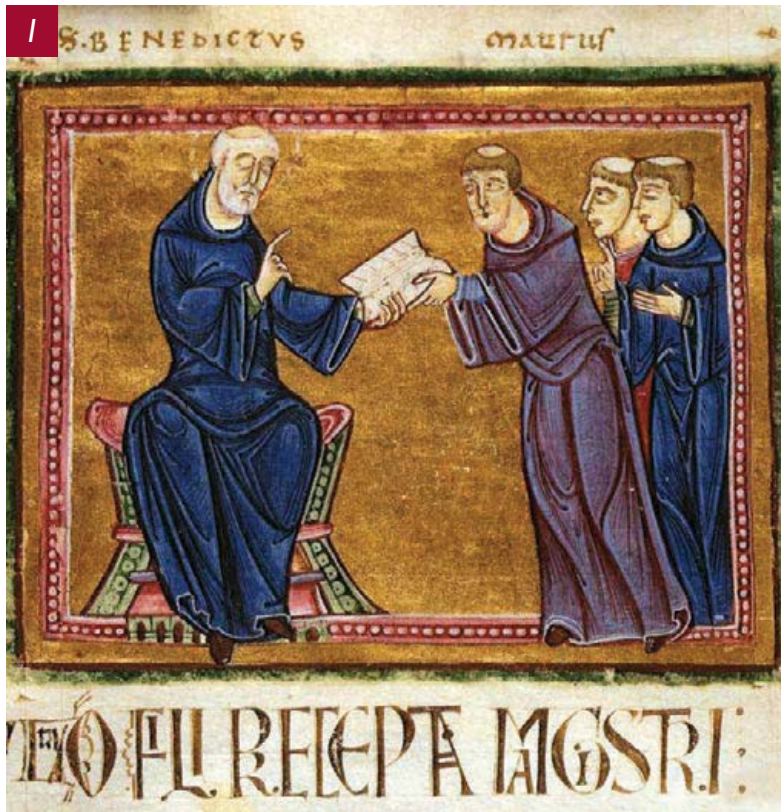
**Abbot Christopher
Schwartz, OSB**

SIXTH ABBOT OF SAINT ANDREW ABBEY
2008-2013



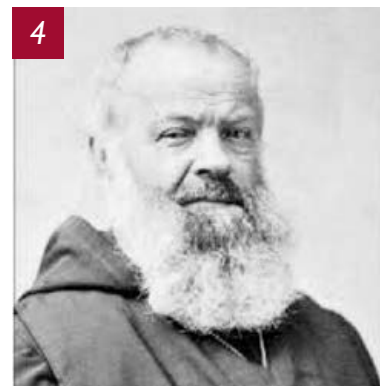
Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB
SEVENTH ABBOT OF SAINT ANDREW ABBEY
ELECTED AUGUST 6, 2014

INTRODUCTION



1. St. Benedict gives his Holy Rule to his monks. Painting from 1129 AD at the monastery of St. Gille, Nimes, France.

2. St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania circa 1900.



3. Monte Cassino Abbey near Rome where St. Benedict is buried.

4. Abbot Boniface Wimmer, OSB

5. Founding monks in Lisle. (First row, far left is Fr. (later Abbot) Valentine Kohlbeck who sent the monks to Cleveland in 1922. Center, Abbot John Nepomucene Jaeger, the first abbot of St. Procopius Abbey.

6. St. Procopius Abbey and College in Lisle, Illinois in the 1920s.

As the monks of Saint Andrew Abbey mark their 100th anniversary of coming to Cleveland, they not only stride bravely toward the future, but genuflect in reverence before a remarkable history which brings them to this year's celebration and witnesses to God's providential care for those who serve Him.



Our history goes back 1500 years to an adolescent Christian named **Benedict** attending classes in the city of Rome around the year 500 AD. According to his biographer, St. Gregory the Great, himself a monk and later the first Benedictine pope, Benedict had been born of Christian parents in the town of Nursia (Norcia) in central Italy around the year 480 AD. Christianity had been legalized only 167 years earlier after nearly three centuries of persecution to various degrees by the pagan Roman empire. The Roman emperor Constantine embraced both Christianity and religious liberty in his Edict of Milan in 313 AD.

The Christians finally claimed their role in Roman society, but without persecution, they started to become lax in their faith and influenced by the immorality in society as the Roman empire began to collapse. Benedict fled the city of Rome and went to live alone in the hills of **Subiaco** as a hermit seeking to know God better and to determine a course for his life.

Soon he attracted followers and eventually drew up a **Rule for Monasteries** that quoted extensively from the Scriptures and used concepts and ideas from other contemporary religious rules of life. Benedict died around 540 AD in his most famous monastery on **Monte Cassino**. As new pagan inhabitants settled in western Europe through the Barbarian invasions from the north, Benedictine monks carried the Christian faith and monastic life to the far corners of the continent. By the year 1000, there were nearly 2,000 monasteries following St. Benedict's rule in Europe.

Three times in its glorious history, the Benedictine order almost faced extinction. In the 10th century, the invasion of the Barbarians left ruins of plundered monasteries throughout Europe. The 14th century found the Benedictines splintered by internal divisions, the Black Plague, and political wars. Finally, anti-religious fervor in the 18th century from revolutions in western Europe closed most Benedictine monasteries across the continent.

Yet, God's providence prevailed and in 1846, the **Abbey of Metten** in Bavaria, originally founded in 766 AD, sent monks to Latrobe, Pennsylvania to minister to German immigrants. **St. Vincent Archabbey** was founded and soon began to establish more monasteries in the United States. In 1885 monks from St. Vincent's traveled to the Midwest and founded **St. Procopius Abbey**, first in downtown Chicago, and then in suburban Lisle, Illinois to work with Czech Catholic immigrant families.

The Czechs and Slovaks were two of the ethnic groups that



emerged in European history around the 6th century from a very large migration wave later known as the Slavs who settled in Central and Eastern Europe and parts of the Balkans. The common base of the Slavic language united them until groups settled in lands distant from each other which brought about local modifications in language. Today, groups as diverse as the Russians, Poles, Bulgarians, Slovenians, Croatians, Serbians, Ukrainians, Czechs (Bohemians) and Slovaks consider themselves Slavic and distantly related with the ability to understand to some degree each of their native languages.

Around the ninth century, Czechs and Slovaks were part of the Moravian Empire. However, by the 17th century, the Czechs were part of the Austrian empire to their south and west and the Slovaks were under the control of the Kingdom of Hungary to their south and east. In the 18th century the Czechs and the Slovaks were ruled by the new combined Austro-Hungarian empire. At the end of World War I in 1918 when the Austro-Hungarian empire was defeated, the Treaty of Versailles created a new country called Czecho-Slovakia bringing the Czechs and Slovaks into political unity.

Before the creation of Czecho-Slovakia, many Czechs and Slovaks sought political and economic freedom by migrating to the United States in large numbers especially in the 1880s. Czechs tended to settle farther west in Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Texas, while Slovaks were attracted to Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, and New Jersey. Many Czech

immigrants and most Slovak immigrants were Catholic and were very much in need of priests who could speak their language.

Saint Vincent's Archabbey, the first Benedictine monastery in the United States, was founded in Latrobe, Pennsylvania in 1846 by Bavarian monks who came to minister among German immigrants. In 1877, Archabbot Boniface Wimmer, OSB of Saint Vincent's, sent a Czech-speaking monk to Nebraska to lay the foundation for an eventual Czech Benedictine abbey. After seven years of frustration over obstacles in Nebraska, Abbot Boniface agreed to drop the Nebraska plan and instead send Czech-speaking monks to staff St. Procopius Parish in Chicago in 1885.

Two years later in 1887, the monks in Chicago opened St. Procopius College which offered a high school curriculum despite its name. Eventually, it expanded to include a full college course of studies and was relocated to a more rural setting outside Chicago in Lisle, Illinois. By 1916, the abbey left Chicago and also moved to Lisle.

The story of Saint Andrew Abbey in Cleveland begins first in Slovakia in the small village of Lemesany in Eastern Slovakia on July 24, 1884 with the birth of John Vaniscak who would immigrate to Johnstown, Pennsylvania around the turn of the century. In 1903, he enrolled in St. Procopius College in Lisle, Illinois and then the plans of Divine Providence began to unfold.



Saints Andrew Svorad and Benedict Skalka

Most people are probably unaware that Saint Andrew Abbey is not named after Saint Andrew the Apostle. It is named after Saint Andrew Svorad. The former St. Benedict's Church was named after his companion Saint Benedict Skalka.

Saints Andrew and Benedict were two monastic hermits who lived in Eastern Europe during the 11th century. They lived lives of prayer and incredible austerity as gathered from the many stories passed down about them. They both lived on Mt. Skalka above the Vah River. Andrew later entered the Benedictine Abbey of Zobor near Nitra, Slovakia and he died there. Benedict continued to live on Mt. Skalka. He was killed by robbers who threw his body into the river. Later it was recovered and both saints are buried in the cathedral of Nitra. Their feast is July 17.



Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB, subprior of Saint Andrew Abbey and history teacher at BHS along with two members of the Benedictine High School Class of 2022, **Henry Peyrebrune** (left) and **Bryce Brand** (center) admire the bronze bust of **Fr. Gregory Vaniscak, OSB**, that was sculpted in 1949 by artist-in-residence **Ugo Graziotti** from Rome. Fr. Gregory is considered the founder of Saint Andrew Abbey which will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Benedictine monks in Cleveland from Lisle, Illinois in 2022.

THE DREAM OF FR. GREGORY VANISCAK

BY FR. GERARD GONDA, OSB

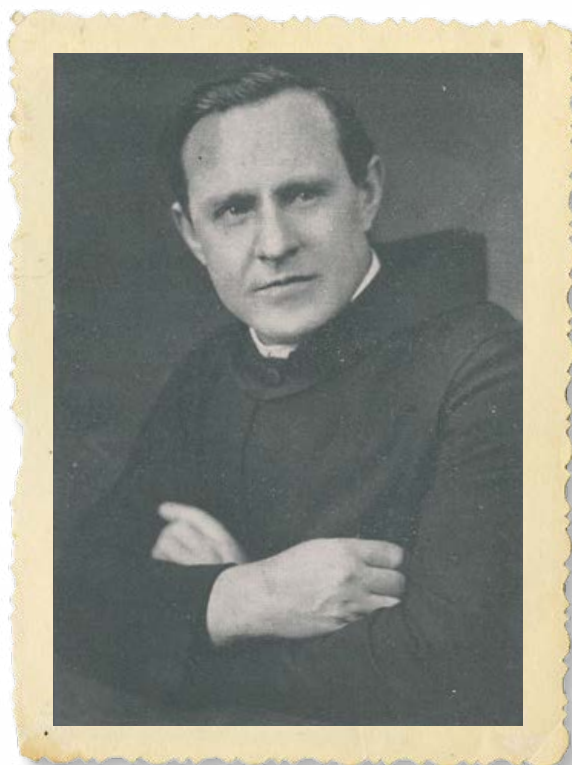
2022 will indeed be a year of celebration for Saint Andrew Abbey and Benedictine High School. February 5, 2022 will mark the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the first Benedictine monks in Cleveland and September 8, 2022 will begin the 95th academic year for Benedictine High School.

The one historical personality that connects both of these anniversaries is **Fr. Gregory Vaniscak, OSB** who is considered the founder of Saint Andrew Abbey and the earliest promoter of the establishment of Benedictine High School. Fr. Gregory also connects both institutions to their Slovak heritage.

In 1972, for the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Benedictine monks in Cleveland, **Fr. Andrew Pier, OSB**, veteran BHS history teacher and former principal, wrote the following account of Fr. Gregory's early life:

"Well, the beginning of Saint Andrew Abbey in Cleveland, Ohio actually goes back to Slovakia where a young boy, **John Vaniscak**, dreamed about becoming a priest. The dream recurred frequently as he drowsed while tending a flock of sheep in the hills surrounding the picturesque village of Lemesany in the Saris district of Eastern Slovakia. He was born in Lemesany on July 24, 1884.

The first step to fulfilling this dream was made around the turn of the century when a family decision enabled the young man with a vision to cross the Atlantic Ocean to join his uncle in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Youthful Vaniscak's job in the steel mills seemed to sidetrack his aspirations to the priesthood until the intervention of Fr. John Martvon, pastor of the flourishing Slovak parish of St. Stephen's and Fr. Matthew Jankola, eventual founder of the Slovak Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius, sent the young man on his



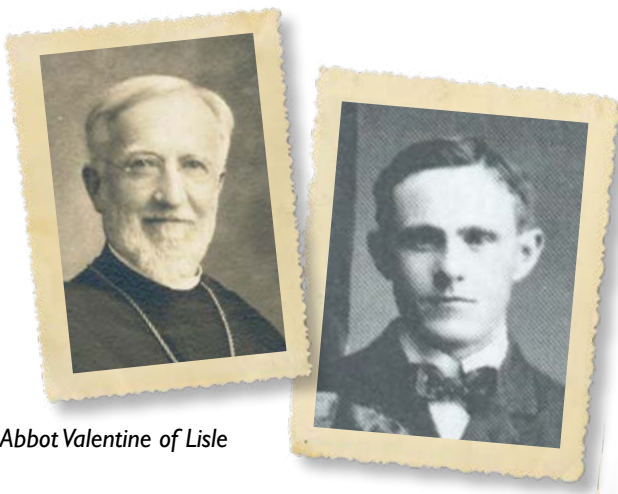
Fr. Gregory Vaniscak, OSB

way to realize his dream. John was enrolled at St. Procopius College in Lisle, Illinois in 1903 where the Czech Benedictines were destined to train an entire generation of Slovak clergy who were very much in demand in the increasing number of new Slovak Catholic parishes in the East and Midwest.

From the very start, John Vaniscak, a solid student with a resolute will and a vision, devoted himself faithfully to his studies and soon manifested his desire to become a Benedictine monk. Upon being accepted by the monastic chapter of St. Procopius as a novice at the age of 24 in 1908, he was given the religious name of Gregory, after Saint Gregory the Great, the first Benedictine pope. Long before his ordination as a priest in 1914, Fr. Gregory became the leader of a

nucleus of young Slovak monks at St. Procopius Abbey who shared his new dream of establishing a Slovak Benedictine community in this country. Foremost among them were the future Fathers Stanislaus Gmuca, Celestine Drexler, Charles Florek, Leo Rehak, and George Luba (founder of Benedictine High School)."

The Slovak Catholic Federation, an umbrella organization for a number of cultural and fraternal societies for Slovak immigrants in the United States, first proposed the idea of founding a Slovak-American institution of higher learning in 1914. At that time, a number of sons of Slovak immigrants were enrolled at St.



Abbot Valentine of Lisle

John Vaniscak in college

Procopius High School and College in Lisle, Illinois because the monks there were predominantly of Czech background. Czechs and Slovaks share a Slavic heritage and a similar language. In Europe at that time, both Czechs and Slovaks were subjects of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

When the monks of St. Procopius Abbey heard about the desire of the Slovak Catholic Federation to start a Slovak-American high school, they offered to create a Slovak section for their high school and college in Lisle as a more affordable alternative. The leaders of the Slovak Catholic Federation liked the idea and accepted it in principle at their convention in Johnstown, Pennsylvania (Fr. Gregory's hometown) in 1914. ***This would have been the end of the efforts to create a Slovak abbey and high school, but World War I (1914-1918) changed everything.***

At the end of World War I, the Treaty of Versailles re-organized the lands of the defeated Austro-Hungarian empire and created the country of Czecho-Slovakia, in which the Czechs and Slovaks were to live as equal partners. However, disputes soon developed between the majority Czechs and the minority Slovaks. These tensions carried over to the immigrant communities in the United States and the Slovaks decided to found their own monastery and high school instead of merging with St. Procopius. After 1918, the Slovak Catholic Federation began looking for a sympathetic bishop and diocese for this project.

They found it in the person of **Bishop Joseph Schrembs** of Cleveland. Born in Germany, his family had settled in Grand Rapids, Michigan where he was ordained a priest. He and his brother attended St. Vincent's Benedictine College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania where his brother eventually became a monk. Joseph rose in the ranks of the Church and was named Bishop of Cleveland in 1921. When approached by officers of the Slovak Catholic Federation, Bishop Schrembs was enthusiastic to have a Slovak monastery and high school in his diocese.

As a newly-ordained priest in 1914, Fr. Gregory was assigned to St. Michael's Church in Chicago, a Slovak parish that had recently gone through tensions with one of its previous pastors who was a Czech Benedictine. Fr. Gregory was an active member of the

Slovak Catholic Federation and privately shared the news of Bishop Schrembs' positive response with his superior, **Abbot Valentine Kohlbeck, OSB**, of Saint Procopius Abbey in a very emotional letter on November 13, 1921.

In one section of that letter, Fr. Gregory wrote, ***"I think it is known to you that it has long been the ardent desire of the Slovak people to found a Benedictine monastery here in AmericaThere are only two saints of Slovak nationality of which our Slovak nation can boast – Saint Andrew (Svorad) and Saint Benedict (Skalka), both Benedictines.....And this binds the Slovaks to the order of St. Benedict in a particularly close manner....I think that if the Most Rev. Bishop Schrembs offers us a parish we could take charge of that parish, and leave the rest to Divine Providence."***

Divine Providence was indeed at work because it turned out that Bishop Schrembs and Abbot Valentine had been classmates at St. Vincent's College and sat next to each other in the study hall. Two weeks later, Abbot Valentine presented the idea to the monks of St. Procopius Abbey. The monks were mostly positive and so Abbot Valentine conferred with Bishop Schrembs. The bishop approached the pastors of the eight Slovak parishes in Cleveland to see if one would be willing to resign and give his parish to the Benedictines. **Fr. John Liscinsky** selflessly offered his parish – St. Andrew's at East 51st and Superior Avenue. The monks of St. Procopius voted on January 9, 1922 to accept the parish as a base for a new Benedictine monastery.

Ironically, Fr. Gregory was not to arrive in Cleveland until 1928 because the Archbishop of Chicago would not release him from St. Michael's Parish until then. However, he continued to work to build support for the new monastic community in Cleveland of which he would be elected superior in 1929. In the meantime, Abbot Valentine sent **Fr. Stanislaus Gmuca, OSB**, Fr. Gregory's assistant at St. Michael's, who had only been ordained two years earlier, to Cleveland to become pastor of Saint Andrew's Parish on **February 5, 1922.**



Bishop Joseph Schrembs

Fr. John Liscinsky



Thousands gathered at St. John's Cathedral in Cleveland on October 2, 1934 for the solemn blessing of Abbot Stanislaus by Bishop Joseph Schrembs.

Fr. Gregory's Dream, Part 2 (1930-1966) Centennial History by Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71

New Growth, New Location, New Challenges

When Fr. Stanislaus Gmuca, OSB mounted the pulpit at St. Andrew's Church at East 51st and Superior Avenue on Sunday, February 5, 1922, and introduced himself as the new pastor, the dream of Fr. Gregory Vaniscak, OSB that began in the hills of Slovakia several decades earlier began a new chapter.

Fr. Stanislaus was the only Benedictine monk in Cleveland and the parishioners were confused that their pastor of 14 years, Fr. John Liscinsky, had been willing to turn his parish over to Benedictine monks from Illinois. The parish was rapidly growing and a fund drive was underway to build a new church. The new pastor soon met with the parish council and agreed with the need to expand the facilities.

In July of 1922, Abbot Valentine of St. Procopius Abbey assigned **Fr. Celestine Drexler, OSB** as an assistant to Fr. Stanislaus in Cleveland. The two pioneer Benedictines conducted a parish census and by November reported that there were 400 families and 416 children in the parochial school. Additional property was bought and the Sisters of Notre Dame who taught in St. Andrew's School were asked by Fr. Stanislaus to move back to their motherhouse down the street and

vacate the convent. Fr. Stanislaus and Fr. Celestine moved into the former convent.

In the meantime, the Slovak Catholic Federation and the Slovak Catholic Educational Institute were eager to start raising funds for the proposed Slovak monastery and high school. In a letter to Fr. Stanislaus in 1923, Abbot Valentine expressed doubts that the proposed high school could get enough students in Cleveland and suggested that it might be better to build the monastery and high school in **Youngstown**. That would have completely changed the history of the "Home of Champions." Fortunately, Fr. Stanislaus did not respond to that suggestion.

By 1924, it was decided that there was not enough land to build a separate church and school. The architects came up with a clever solution – a two floor structure in which the lower floor was the church and

the upper floor was the school but with the external appearance that the entire building was a church. From the outside it resembled a Spanish mission church. The new Saint Andrew Church and school were dedicated in 1926.

The old rectory was moved behind the new church and combined with a house that had been purchased. The contractors made 12 private rooms, a chapel, dining room and living room so that it could function as the first monastery when more monks arrived. In 1927, Abbot Valentine sent **Fr. Leo Rehak, OSB** as an assistant at St. Andrew's Parish and **Fr. George Luba, OSB** to organize the opening of Benedictine High School. Four Benedictine brothers of Slovak background were also sent from Lisle to Cleveland.

With the approval of the monks of St. Procopius Abbey and the Vatican, the small monastic community in Cleveland



St. Andrew's Church and school, East 52 Street and Superior Avenue, was the first location of the abbey and high school.

was declared a **Dependent Priory** on **July 21, 1927**, the first step in the process of becoming an abbey. The Cleveland community would still have the support of St. Procopius Abbey. Abbot Valentine appointed Fr. Stanislaus as the first prior of the new dependent priory and the first president of Benedictine High School, as well as continuing as pastor of St. Andrew's Parish. **Superior Avenue was the first location of the monastery and Benedictine High School.**

Benedictine High School opened on **September 8, 1927** with 26 freshmen located in two classrooms above St. Andrew's Church. St. Andrew's Elementary School occupied the other classrooms. Almost immediately, Prior Stanislaus started looking for a larger property to relocate the priory and high school.

In a letter to Abbot Valentine from Prior Stanislaus dated January 20, 1928, there is the first mention of a possible new location on Buckeye Road, *"There is a 15 acre plot of ground near East 116th Street (sic) and Buckeye Road that would be excellent for a high school. It is owned by the Sisters of Notre Dame. There we could accommodate day scholars and boarders at the same time."*

The reference was to **St. Mary's Institute** (though he probably meant to say East Boulevard instead of East 116th Street).

In 1874, the Sisters of Notre Dame purchased the property and ten years later they opened an orphanage for girls. By May of 1928, Prior Stanislaus wrote to Abbot Valentine that it was a *"beautiful spot"* and that Bishop Schrembs supported the purchase for a renegotiated price of \$119,000.

In the meantime, Fr. Gregory Vaniscak, OSB had been balancing his duties as pastor of St. Michael's Parish in Chicago with frequent out-of-town trips to raise funds for the Benedictines in Cleveland from Slovak organizations. He finally received permission from Cardinal Mundelein to resign as pastor and come to Cleveland later in 1928.

In some ways, **Bishop Joseph Schrembs** can be considered a third founder of St. Andrew Abbey because he went out his way to insure the success of the new monastic foundation and high school. Not only did he help negotiate a lower price for the sale of St. Mary's Institute, but at the same time he decided to give the Benedictines a second parish in the diocese to increase the monks' income. In 1928 he announced that property at the corner of East Boulevard and Lamontier Avenue that belonged to St. Ladislaus Parish would become the site of a new parish named **St. Benedict's** which would be administered by the Benedictine monks.

Abbot Valentine appointed Fr. Gregory as the new prior in Cleveland in 1928

and Fr. Stanislaus as the first pastor of St. Benedict's Parish. Prior Gregory was responsible for remodeling St. Mary's Institute into a monastery, high school, and boarders' quarters. At the same time, the number of priest-monks reached six which qualified the community to become an **independent priory** totally separate from St. Procopius Abbey. Prior Gregory was elected as the first Conventual Prior of the now-independent community on October 3, 1929.

It should be noted that Prior Gregory assumed his responsibilities just as the Great Depression hit the country. It became almost impossible to raise money and the monks had large loans to pay off and new buildings to renovate and furnish. But they moved ahead with courage and faith. Each year a new class was added to Benedictine High School.

Prior Gregory focused on growing the monastic community which had seven priests, four seminarians (clerics) and four brothers in 1929. He worked hard in corresponding with young Slovak-American men he had met in his fundraising travels to Slovak parishes across the country. In the summer of 1933, he astonished Abbot Valentine when he wrote to him asking if the tailor at St. Procopius Abbey would be able to make monastic habits for the nine men who were ready to become novices for St. Andrew's Priory.



The former St. Mary's Institute which became the abbey and high school on Buckeye Road in 1929.

Abbot Valentine responded in a letter saying, *"I congratulate you and your community of having such a great number of novices and such fine young men. I do not think there is another abbey in our congregation that has such a number!"* All nine persevered and professed vows and the community grew quickly to 40 members in 1934 and received permission to become an abbey and elect an abbot.

Only the 13 priest monks of the abbey were eligible to participate in the election of the first abbot on August 8, 1934. To the surprise of many, Fr. Stanislaus, who was only 39 years old, was elected instead of Fr. Gregory, who was the senior monk at the age of 49. Although Fr. Gregory led the efforts to establish the Slovak monastery and high school for over 20 years, he had only been in Cleveland for five years. Many believe the election broke his heart.

Fr. Gregory was assigned as pastor of St. Andrew's Parish where he remained the final three years of his life. He died of a massive heart attack on January 15, 1938 while walking to St. Andrew's Church on



Abbot Theodore Kojis, OSB who served from 1946-66.



The new Benedictine High School under construction in 1940.

Superior Avenue to hear confessions after getting off the street car. He was only 53 years old and the first member of St. Andrew Abbey to die.

The solemn blessing of Abbot Stanislaus took place on October 2, 1934 at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in downtown Cleveland with Bishop Joseph Schrembs officiating. Photos from the Mass show an overflow crowd which spilled out to the sidewalks and front plaza after the ceremony for the taking of official pictures. Slovaks from across the nation attended with pride because Abbot Stanislaus became the first Slovak-American Catholic prelate.

The election of the first abbot of St. Andrew Abbey made a great impact in several areas. First, it brought publicity to Benedictine High School which was only in its seventh year with a small enrollment of around 100 students. Five years later the student body would double in number. Abbot Stanislaus was a daring visionary when he broke ground for a new high school building in 1940 that would fit 1,000 students, an enrollment which would be realized only seven years later.

Abbot Stanislaus also helped increase the high school's enrollment by initiating the only machine shop technical program in a Cleveland Catholic high school in 1940. He felt that a number of Catholic students were choosing public schools that offered this program especially as the United States came closer to entering World War II. This unique program lasted until 1956 and received praise from the U.S.

government for the quality of its work.

As recounted in the Spring 2021 issue of *Ora et Labora*, Abbot Stanislaus's pride and joy, the new Benedictine High School, opened in September of 1940, but averted a near major tragedy when the boilers exploded at midday on November 1, 1940 ripping through the cafeteria and two other floors. The "miracle" was that it was All Saints Day, a holy day of obligation, and no students were in the building at the time.

As mentioned above, the fact that Abbot Stanislaus was the first Slovak-American prelate in the United States made a great impact in several areas. Though the notoriety helped increase support for the high school, the frequent invitations accepted by Abbot Stanislaus to officiate at Slovak events across the country eventually created a psychological distance between the abbot and the monks. The fact that Abbot Stanislaus had primarily lived and worked in parishes before his election also contributed to tensions within the abbey where life followed a different structure of times for "Prayer and Work" (*Ora et Labora*).

After meeting with officials of the American Cassinese Congregation of Benedictine abbeys in the United States, Abbot Stanislaus resigned his leadership positions in 1946 and was given permission to return to parish life in the Diocese of Pittsburgh where he remained until his death in 1977. A successful builder of brick and mortar,

he, sadly, could not find the same success in building up the internal life of the monastery.

The second new era in the history of St. Andrew Abbey began on June 20, 1946, when 37-year-old **Fr. Theodore Kojis, OSB** was elected the second abbot. At the time he was the youngest Benedictine abbot in the world. Born in Slovakia, he came to the U.S. as a child and grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He was one of the first two novices to join St. Andrew's Independent Priory in 1929. At the time of his election, he was a math teacher on the faculty of BHS.

For the next 20 years (1946-66), Abbot Theodore would guide the abbey and high school through continued growth. The remarkable expansion of the Catholic Church in the United States with the "Baby Boomer" generation of young families following World War II characterized the two decades of Abbot Theodore's leadership.

Even the new high school building soon needed expansion with a growing enrollment that surpassed **1,000 students** for the first time in 1946. By 1947, the third floor of the main school building was completed with classrooms in each wing for 200 additional students. A new building was constructed south of the boiler room that housed the expanded machine shop and a weather station was added to the roof of the main building.

In 1952, with the financial assistance of Archbishop Edward Hoban, Abbot Theodore was able to expand the industrial



The new Saint Andrew Abbey when it was dedicated in 1952.

arts building four times its original size and construct an overpass to connect it to the main classroom building. (**That famous overpass, later named "The Brother Ted Spirit Bridge," was recently removed during construction of the new entrance atrium.**) By the 1960's, the science classrooms would occupy that building and a new gymnasium, cafeteria, and auditorium were added.

The biggest challenge facing Abbot Theodore, however, was the building of a new monastery to house the increasing number of monks. The monastic community that moved into the former St. Mary's Institute in 1929 numbered 13 monks. By the time of Abbot Theodore's election in 1946, there were 66 monks. While expensive additions were being made to the school in the early 1950's, loans were being negotiated and contracts were signed for a million dollar new monastery.

Abbot Theodore had a special interest in the design of the new abbey because he was remarkably able to earn a master's degree in Art and Architecture from Western Reserve University five years after his abbatial election. The final plans called for a traditional style quadrangle with a courtyard and a long, narrow church.

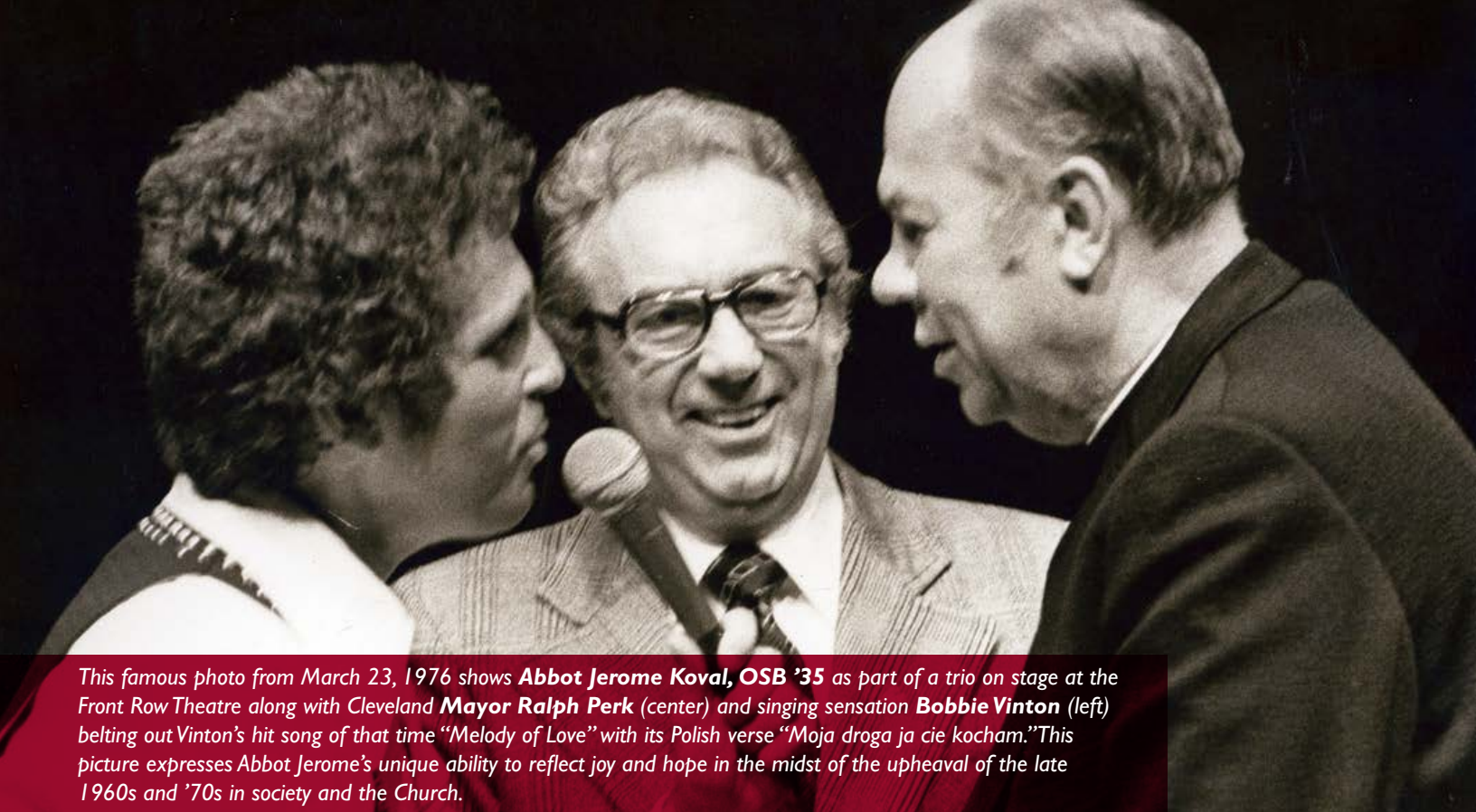
However, the special cut Indiana limestone chosen for the project proved more expensive than the budget. Only two sides of the quadrangle were completed without the church when the new abbey was formally blessed by **Abbot Primate Bernard Kaelin, OSB** from Rome on August 6, 1952. The two old buildings that had served as the abbey and high school since 1929 were partially kept in use by the monks. It would take another 32 years before the quadrangle and church were completed by Abbot Roger Gries, OSB in 1984.

By 1960, Saint Andrew Abbey reached its highest membership with 80 monks.

Only four monks had died since the Benedictines came to Cleveland 37 years earlier. There were 30 monks on the faculty of Benedictine High School, 17 brothers working in the abbey, 15 priest monks serving at 8 parishes and chaplaincies in 7 states, and 8 seminarians. Abbot Theodore celebrated his 25th anniversary as a priest in 1961 and completed the construction of the new BHS gymnasium in 1962. There were winds of change stirring in the Church and American society as Abbot Theodore, after 20 years in leadership, announced his retirement in 1966 for health reasons.



Monks process into St. Benedict's Church on October 3, 1959 to mark the 25th anniversary of the 1934 elevation of the abbey.



This famous photo from March 23, 1976 shows **Abbot Jerome Koval, OSB '35** as part of a trio on stage at the Front Row Theatre along with Cleveland **Mayor Ralph Perk** (center) and singing sensation **Bobbie Vinton** (left) belting out Vinton's hit song of that time "Melody of Love" with its Polish verse "Moja droga ja cie kocham." This picture expresses Abbot Jerome's unique ability to reflect joy and hope in the midst of the upheaval of the late 1960s and '70s in society and the Church.

Fr. Gregory's Dream, Part 3 (1966-2001) Centennial History by Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71

Survival and New Opportunities

When Abbot Jerome Koval, OSB was blessed as the third abbot of Saint Andrew Abbey on June 28, 1966, **Abbot Gilbert Hess, OSB** of Blue Cloud Abbey in Marvin, South Dakota was one of the visiting prelates in attendance. During the banquet in the high school gymnasium which followed the solemn blessing at St. Benedict's Church by Bishop Clarence Isenmann, Abbot Gilbert fell off the raised dais where the head table was located and broke his hip. He stayed in Cleveland longer than he anticipated for the surgery and recovery.

Abbot Gilbert's broken hip was a harbinger of the many unexpected problems that all the newly-elected abbots in the United States faced in the second half of the 1960s. Fortunately for Saint Andrew Abbey, the Cleveland monks elected a man who was able to weather the coming storms more successfully than most of the other religious superiors of that tempestuous time.

The late 1960s quickly manifested itself as a period of rebellion against authority in all its forms. The Civil Rights movement that began down South in the late 1950s soon spread north and resulted in massive protest marches and demonstrations against racial inequality. The inadequate and often weak response of the federal and state governments to this crisis caused more frustration that brought about urban riots.

The Hough neighborhood in Cleveland had a major riot in 1966 and the Glenville Shootout took place two years later. Fear overtook the white ethnic population of older Cleveland neighborhoods and many residents fled to the suburbs.

Almost from the time of his blessing in 1966, Abbot Jerome was faced with the rapid transformation of the **Buckeye-Woodland neighborhood** as ethnic whites fled the city for the suburbs. First, important parochial grade schools that provided students for Benedictine High School declined in enrollment and eventually closed like St. Benedict's, St. Margaret of Hungary, St. Elizabeth's, Our Lady of Mt Carmel, St. Catherine's, and Our Lady of Peace. From 1966 to 1976, the enrollment of BHS fell from 914 to

402. Soon many of these neighboring parishes closed completely.

Abbot Jerome soon heard from alumni, benefactors, and even some of his monks, calling for the abbey and high school to relocate to the suburbs. He initially resisted any support for that idea citing the unique Benedictine vow of stability, which in history always had a geographic aspect of monks remaining in one place and improving it with their presence.

But later he allowed the formation of a Relocation Committee of monks that quietly investigated possible properties that might be on the market such as the former Byzantine Catholic High School in Parma and Mount Augustine campus in Richfield, Ohio, now the location of



Fr. Norbert Ozimek, OSB '59 speaks at a BHS prom in the 1970s when long hair, wide sideburns, and paisley pants conveyed the nonconformist spirit of the times. Something of a non-conformist himself, Fr. Norbert gave a needed boost to the high school's enrollment with his work in expanding the bus fleet.

Regina Health Center. Such a move would involve both the abbey and the high school. A survey taken of the monastic community by the Relocation Committee in 1978 found only seven monks favoring moving and 27 voting to stay.

Abbot Jerome also saw hope in urban renewal which had begun to rebuild old neighborhoods. Once, in the 1970s he publicly predicted, "Someday the Cleveland Clinic will change this whole area." *His prophecy has been fulfilled with the recent transformation of the old Health Hill Children's Hospital on the corner of Buckeye Road and M.L. King Drive into the Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital for Rehabilitation and the Lerner School of Autism.*

As relocation became more and more unrealistic, Abbot Jerome sought to get the abbey and high school more involved in making positive improvements to the neighborhood. As early as 1967, he directed BHS to host over 250 people for the Second Human Relations Neighborhood Conference. Later, the Buckeye-Woodland Community Congress would hold its annual convention in the

high school auditorium with the abbot and other monks participating.

In 1976, Abbot Jerome sacrificed a young monk from the high school faculty to become co-pastor of St. Benedict's Parish.

Fr. Albert Marflak, OSB, who was ordained only a year earlier, was sent to the abbey's closest parish to help develop more programs that would impact the neighborhood. Later, **Bro. Philip Petrow, OSB**, would also be assigned to St. Benedict's to work with social outreach. Fr. Albert would remain there for 14 years working with **Fr. Matthew Bonk, OSB** who focused his ministry on the elderly Slovak parishioners.

Abbot Jerome was cautiously open to new ideas. To make the high school more accessible to students from suburban Catholic schools, he allowed **Fr. Norbert (Anthony) Ozimek, OSB '59** to devote more time to enlarging the BHS bus fleet and maintaining it. From one BHS school bus that went downtown each morning in 1967, Fr. Norbert expanded the transportation program to nine daily routes by 1980. The bus service was key to increasing the enrollment from 402 to 505 in three years. His successor, **Bro. Philip Petrow, OSB** converted the vehicles from gasoline to liquid propane fuel in 1979.

A second major storm that unleashed its fury at the time of the election of

Abbot Jerome in 1966 was the unplanned confluence of the anti-war protests, the sexual revolution, and the misplaced frenzy for new freedoms within the Catholic Church following the close of the Second Vatican Council in 1965.

The "Baby Boomer" generation of those Americans born after World War II between 1946-64 realized the power they possessed as they reached a record 75 million by 1960. Colleges saw record enrollments and students grew in confidence to protest unpopular school policies when they saw that the pressure they exerted was effective in getting desired changes. Baby Boomers were also often shielded from sacrifices and suffering by their parents who did not want their children to go through what they experienced in the Great Depression and World War II.

The unpopular Vietnam War saw an escalation in U.S. combat troops from 1965-69 with a similar escalation in casualties. College students, who were the segment of the population most effected by the war, began massive protests against the government especially as college draft deferments were dropped. Eventually a counter-culture was born in which the Baby Boomers lost trust in all forms of authority and tradition. The "hippie" movement turned to drugs and dropping out of conventional society. The invention of the birth control pill in 1960 led to the sexual revolution with sex losing its sacred



The sudden increase in young monks in the abbey in the 1970s and early '80s was seen as another sign of God's favor. From (l-r): **Francis Fergus, Charles Hawkins, Gary Hoover '74, Dismas Boeff '66, Michael Severance, Peter Ancell, Gabriel Balazovic, and Bede Kotlinski.**

role in marriage only to grow as a form of recreation. Living by Christian sexual morality was dismissed as no longer valid.

The youth rebellion and counterculture coincided with the end of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) which was called by Pope John XXIII to make the teachings of the Catholic Church more understandable to modern society and to promote the reunification of Christianity that was damaged by the Orthodox schism in 1054 AD and the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. However how respectable the aims of the official documents produced by the Council were, confusion ensued when overly zealous reformers often substituted their own interpretations of the "Spirit of Vatican II" and rebelled against the laws and traditions of the Church including religious life.

Suddenly, vocations of young men to the priesthood and religious life dropped off dramatically and even more for young women desiring to become nuns. The value of celibacy and the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience were called into question. In 1965 there were 48,000 male seminarians in the United States. By 1970 the number dropped to 28,000. In addition to a drop in number of those entering, large numbers of priests and nuns asked to be released from their vows and left their communities and married during this time. Rebellion against the authority of religious superiors was widespread.



Abbot Jerome addresses nearly 700 friends who filled the BHS gymnasium on April 16, 1972 for the Gala Banquet marking the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Benedictine monks in Cleveland. **Bishop Clarence Isenmann** and **Fr. Andrew Pier, OSB** look on.

American Benedictine abbots witnessed dramatic changes in their communities. From 1966-76, of the 16 abbeys in the American Cassinese Congregation, all experienced noticeable declines in membership, some losing as much as 30 to 40% of their monks to death, defections, and lack of vocations. **However, only Saint Andrew Abbey saw a modest increase in membership of 1% during that same period. There were 65 monks in 1966 and 66 monks in 1976 despite the fact that 11 monks died during that decade and six priests resigned and married. More impressive was the fact that Saint Andrew Abbey went against national trends by doubling the**

professions of new monks in the 1970s (23) over professions in the 1960s (13).

Credit for surviving the storms of the 1960s and 70s so well must be given to Abbot Jerome whose years as superior spanned exactly the time period of 1966-81. The combination of his traditional religious piety with his jovial sense of humor allowed him to effectively dialogue with his monks and avoid rebellion against his authority. Upon his election he sought to bring more equality of the role of the brother monks who were not priests. He allowed them to pursue college degrees and not just engage in manual labor. He increased the annual vacation of solemnly professed monks to three weeks recognizing the multiple jobs many monks were doing. He avoided radical changes in the form and practice of monastic life by forming committees that studied and carefully recommended necessary changes as called for by the Vatican Council.

In 1972, Saint Andrew Abbey celebrated the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the first Benedictine monks in Cleveland. The first monk who arrived in Cleveland back in 1922, **Fr. (later Abbot) Stanislaus Gmuca, OSB** was actually present for the celebration which began with a Pontifical Mass celebrated by Cleveland Bishop Clarence Isenmann in Saint Benedict's Church. The homilist was **Bishop Andrew Grutka** of Gary, Indiana, the first Slovak-American bishop. Nearly 700 alumni, friends and benefactors attended the Mass



Abbot Jerome leads the monks in community prayer in the lower level chapel that was in use from 1952-84.



Assumption Parish, Broadview Heights, Ohio



Monks gather in 1983 at Assumption Parish for a dinner for outgoing pastor Fr. Augustine Yurko, OSB and incoming pastor Fr. David Vizsolyi, OSB '43. (L-R – seated): Fr. Gerard, Fr. Anselm, Fr. Charles, Abbot Roger, Fr. Augustine, Fr. Joachim, Fr. James. (L-R – standing): Bro. Peter, Bro. Francis, Bro. Simon Zeman, Fr. David, Fr. Raphael, Abbot Jerome, Bro. Alfred, and Fr. Placid.

and then crowded into a beautifully-decorated Benedictine High School gymnasium for the Gala Banquet.

The main address at the dinner was given by **Mr. Joseph Krajsa**, the editor of the **Jednota**, the official publication of the First Catholic Slovak Union (FCSU). Greetings were delivered by **Cleveland Mayor Ralph Perk** (Abbot Jerome's singing partner onstage with **Bobby Vinton** in 1976) and **Abbot President Martin Burne, OSB. John Sabol**,

president of the FCSU and **Elizabeth Lipovsky**, president of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association (FCSLA) also spoke and both presented anniversary donations to Abbot Jerome.

The 50th anniversary was a grand affair, but also somewhat bittersweet. Many in attendance probably wondered if there would be a **100th anniversary** banquet five decades later. Yet within the next five years, signs of hope appeared and Abbot Jerome responded accordingly.

In 1977-78, nine novices were admitted at different dates to begin their monastic training under novice master **Fr. Clement Zeleznik, OSB '50**. This was an unusually high number of novices at that time for any monastery. Although only four would persevere to final vows (including the future **Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB '74**), it was a sign to Abbot Jerome that Divine Providence was coming to the rescue as the tumultuous 1970s were coming to an end.

First, Abbot Jerome brought in younger leadership to the abbey and high school. On St. Benedict's Day, March 21, 1977, after serving eight years as principal (1969-77), **Fr. Roger Gries, OSB '54, 40**, was named prior or second superior of the abbey. He was succeeded as principal by **Fr. Dominic Mondzelewski, OSB '60** who was 35 years old. He would set the record as the longest-serving BHS principal with 17 years at the helm.

Secondly, Abbot Jerome surprised the community in 1977 by announcing that **Bishop James Hickey** of Cleveland had offered the abbey the staffing of **Assumption Parish in Broadview Heights, Ohio**, a large suburban parish with an elementary school. Although short on available, experienced personnel, the community voted to accept the bishop's offer, partly because the abbey's three existing parishes: St. Andrew's and St. Benedict's in Cleveland and St. Michael's in Chicago were all in decline. Assumption Parish offered hope for the future – and



On June 6, 1980. **Abbot Jerome** (left) introduces **Cardinal Basil Hume, OSB**, (center) the Archbishop of Westminster, England and the only Benedictine cardinal in the Catholic Church at the time, to **Mayor George Voinovich of Cleveland** (right). Children from the Cleveland Slovak community are in the foreground.

a good place for Abbot Jerome to live in retirement in the not-too-distant future.

Finally, Abbot Jerome called upon his monks in 1978 to make a year of intense prayer and reflection on the future of the abbey and whether relocation might still be a viable option. Indecision was crippling the abbey and the high school because needed capital improvements kept getting delayed. At the end of that year, the community voted to remain in the Buckeye-Woodland neighborhood and to maintain its major apostolic works of education and pastoral assistance. The decision was formally announced in the presence of **Bishop Hickey** and over 200 diocesan priests gathered to celebrate **St. Benedict's Day on March 21, 1979**. Apart from an increase in vocations, another sign from Divine Providence was that BHS was suddenly growing in enrollment for six years in a row.

In 1980, Abbot Jerome led the abbey through the year-long international celebration of the **1500th anniversary of the birth of St. Benedict**. A Benedictine Jubilee Lecture Series open to the public took place on three evenings in February featuring three American Benedictine scholars. In June Abbot Jerome invited **Cardinal Basil Hume, OSB** of Westminster, England to ordain **Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71** in his home parish of St. Benedict's. Cardinal Hume was the only Benedictine monk in the College of Cardinals and the first active cardinal to ever visit St. Andrew Abbey. In



On August 30, 1981, newly-blessed Abbot Roger Gries, OSB '54 (center) is congratulated by his predecessors Abbot Jerome Koval, OSB '35 (left) and Abbot Theodore Kojis, OSB (right).

September, Abbot Jerome participated in the closing ceremonies for the jubilee year of St. Benedict at **Monte Cassino Abbey** in Italy then remained in Rome for the International Congress of Abbots which included an audience with **Pope St. John Paul II** at the Vatican.

Although Benedictine abbots were traditionally elected for life, in the 1970s, the American-Cassinense Congregation established age 65 as the retirement age for abbots. This was partially in response to the large number of abbots who were resigning early due to the pressures of the office in that era. Although Abbot Jerome was not bound by the new rule since he had been elected in 1966, he surprised many by announcing on **March 26, 1981** that he would retire at the age of 64 and become a senior associate at Assumption Parish in Broadview Heights. *Of the 18 American Cassinese abbots, Abbot Jerome was already second in seniority.*

Prior Roger Gries, OSB '54 was elected the fourth abbot of Saint Andrew Abbey on **June 9, 1981** at the age of 44, a position for which he already seemed to start preparing for when he was a senior at BHS in 1954 and chosen as captain of the football team and **Mr. Benedictine**. In turn, Abbot Roger appointed younger monks to share the leadership duties of the abbey naming **Fr. Anselm Zupka, OSB '59**, age 41 as prior and **Fr. Christopher Schwartz, OSB**, age 35, as subprior.

Almost immediately, he established a Development Office to increase financial support for the abbey and high school.

Fr. Charles Hawkins, OSB was named its first director with **Mrs. Terry Ford**, mother of twin alumni Michael and Timothy of the Class of 1976, as the associate director. Alumnus **James Szubski '59**, Development Director of the Cleveland Natural History Museum, agreed to serve as a consultant. An outside firm was retained to help the monks collectively determine a master plan for the future of the campus. To the monks' surprise all the desired changes would cost close to **\$8 million**! Then a feasibility study was conducted by a firm from Chicago that interviewed many supporters of the abbey and high school. The study concluded that the First Phase of the plan, which would cost **\$4 million** was possible.

In dramatic fashion, Divine Providence chose to intervene once again in the history of St. Andrew Abbey on **February 11, 1982**, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes when the monastic community met to vote acceptance of the First Phase of the master plan. Silence and fear overcame the meeting since the only previous capital campaign in the abbey's history raised \$700,000 for the new gymnasium in 1961. The consultant explained that to raise **\$4 million** would require several gifts of six figures. The abbey had never received gifts of that size.

Abbot Roger asked the monks to trust that the campaign goal would be achieved if it was God's will. The monks voted with hesitancy to go ahead with the master plan and capital campaign. When the vote was completed, Abbot Roger announced that the previous day, the abbey had been notified that the deceased Michael Bedosky, of New York, whose nephew had attended BHS, had made a behest of his IBM stock to the Benedictine Order of Cleveland. Its estimated worth at that time was **one million dollars**, the largest single gift in the history of the abbey or high school.

The First Phase of the capital campaign had a goal to demolish the old abbey and high school building, complete the quadrangle of the new abbey with a third wing and a cloister walkway and garages, and to renovate the science labs in the high school and replace the roof and all



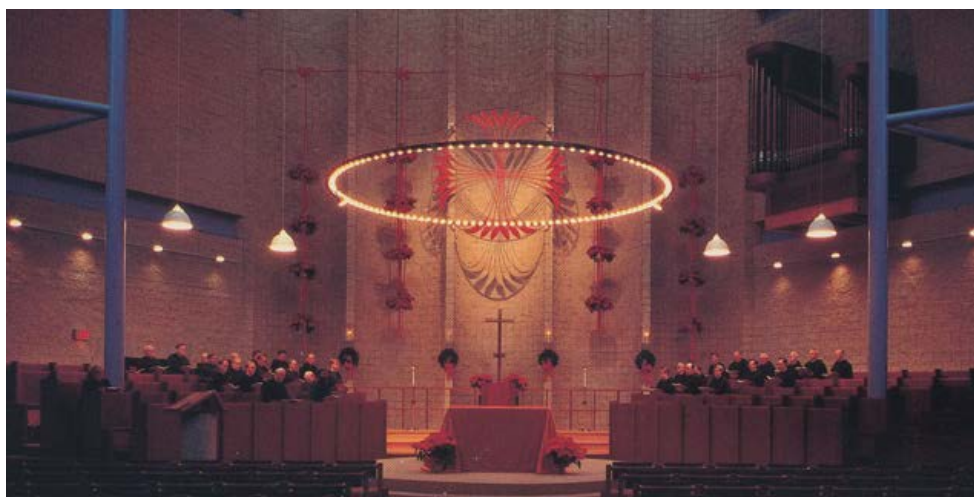
(L-R): **Abbot Roger Gries, OSB '54**, **Prior Anselm Zupka, OSB '58**, and BHS principal **Fr. Dominic Mondzelewski, OSB '60** assumed top leadership positions in the 1980s while they were in their 40s.

windows of the 1940 school building. It was an ambitious plan, but more large donors were needed. The abbey contributed the first \$400,000 toward the school renovations.

Then in August of 1982, the **First Catholic Slovak Union**, a fraternal benefit society with a long relationship to the Slovak Benedictines in Cleveland, voted a gift of \$200,000 at their convention in Chicago. In April of 1983, an anonymous gift of \$100,000 and another gift of \$100,000 by alumnus **Jim Adair '62** were evidence that the faith and prayers of the monks were being answered. Abbot Roger drove to Columbus, Ohio to explain the capital campaign to BHS alumnus **Jim Trueman '53**, the founder of the Red Roof Inns. Jim subsequently visited Benedictine in his private helicopter and made a gift of \$500,000 and five guest rooms for the new abbey guest wing.

When the new abbey was built in 1952, funds ran out before the abbey church was able to be built. For the next 30 years, the monks used a small basement chapel for their daily prayers and walked over to neighboring St. Benedict's Church, owned by the Diocese of Cleveland, for major liturgical celebrations. A **new abbey church** was in the Second Phase of the 1983 capital campaign if more money could be raised.

With Abbot Roger and Abbot Jerome in attendance at the October 1983 national convention of the **First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association** in Pittsburgh, a donation of **one million dollars** was



Abbot Roger's crowning achievement was completing the 1952 Abbey building including the unique Abbey Church which was made possible with a million dollar donation from the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association.

approved for the building of a new church for St. Andrew Abbey. It was the largest single donation in the history of FCSLA. Later the family of **Fr. Placid Pientek, OSB '36**, of New York City, donated the money for the bells in the new church. The capital campaign successfully ended in June of 1985 having raised close to \$5 million. **Abbot Primate Victor Dammertz, OSB** of Rome blessed the new wings of the abbey on August 5, 1986 and Cleveland **Bishop Anthony Pilla** dedicated the new abbey church on August 19, 1986.

For the remaining 15 years that he served as superior, Abbot Roger utilized his charismatic personality to attract new supporters and benefactors who

were not BHS graduates to the work of the Benedictines. His relationships provided new talent and resources for the Benedictine High School Board of Governors (later Trustees) and the newly-created Abbey Financial Advisory Board. He celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation in local parishes to assist Bishop Pilla for 20 years and made the abbey and high school better known and appreciated throughout the diocese.

Abbot Roger was also successful in re-connecting many former alumni who had become inactive with their Alma Mater. After the high school experienced a drop in enrollment in the early 1990s to 320 students as Catholic elementary schools began to close due to increased costs, Abbot Roger brought alumnus **Charles Reynolds '56** back to campus in 1994 as Benedictine's first lay principal and first African-American high school principal in the Diocese of Cleveland. In the next five years, the enrollment would once again approach 400.

In 1997, the Cleveland Benedictines marked their **75th anniversary** and Abbot Roger began to prepare for his required retirement in 2001 when he would turn 65. **Abbot Primate Marcel Rooney, OSB** came from Rome to mark the conclusion of the 75th year festivities by celebrating Mass at Assumption Parish in Broadview Heights on February 22, 1998. However, Rome would call Abbot Roger again in March of 2001 with a special request from Pope St. John Paul II.



Abbot Roger hired alumnus Charles Reynolds '56 (left) as BHS's first lay principal. He served from 1994-1999. Here he is greeted by former monk principals (l-r) Fr. Robert Wilkes, OSB '39 (1957-62 and 1966-69), Fr. Dominic Mondzelewski, OSB '60 (1977-94), Fr. Andrew Pier, OSB (1937-41), Abbot Roger (1969-77), and seated Fr. Armand Gress, OSB (1941-44).



Pope St. John Paul II meets Abbot Roger in the Vatican whom he would eventually choose to become one of two new auxiliary bishops for the Diocese of Cleveland.

Fr. Gregory's Dream, Part 4 (2001-2022) Centennial History by Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71

A BENEDICTINE BISHOP AND BOUNDARIES BEYOND BUCKEYE

On the feast of Saint Benedict, Wednesday **March 21, 2001**, Abbot Roger Gries, OSB, got an unexpected phone call that would change his life and the history of Saint Andrew Abbey. It was from Cleveland **Bishop Anthony Pilla**, a good friend who had just left the abbey after having celebrated the St. Benedict's Day Mass. When he returned to the chancery, he had a call from the pope's representative in Washington, D.C. relating that **Pope (later Saint) John Paul II** had appointed Abbot Roger as one of two new auxiliary bishops for the Diocese of Cleveland. Bishop Pilla told Abbot Roger that he had until Monday to give a response. However, he could not share the news with anyone – even his 87-year-old mother, **Dorothy Gries**, former main office secretary at Benedictine High School, who was residing at the Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged in Richmond Heights.



Abbot Clement being interviewed on national television in 2002 by Fr. Mitch Pacwa, SJ of EWTN.

Monday was **March 26, 2001**, Abbot Roger's 64th birthday. According to the recent changes in the law of the American Cassinese Congregation of Benedictine monasteries, abbots had to resign on their 65th birthday. Abbot Roger had already scribbled a note in his calendar for March 26 saying "365 days to go." Instead, he went to Bishop Pilla's office on his birthday, which was the feast of the **Annunciation** that year (because March 25 fell on a Sunday), and echoed Mary's response to the Archangel Gabriel, "Let it be done to me according to God's will."

Then the diocese made the news public – that Abbot Roger and Fr. Martin Amos, the pastor of nearby St. Dominic's Parish had been named as the two new auxiliary bishops to Bishop Pilla and that their ordination as bishops would take place at St. John's Cathedral on **June 7, 2001**. Saint Andrew Abbey and Benedictine High School were suddenly in the news all over northeast Ohio. Positive public relations resulted from the many television interviews and newspaper articles.

It was unusual before that time for a Benedictine monk or abbot to be named a bishop in the United States. Most bishops in the Catholic Church come from the diocesan clergy – except in mission countries where foreign religious order priests often have more training and experience than the younger native diocesan clergy. However, the late **Pope Paul VI** had shaken up Great Britain

in 1977 when he by-passed all the diocesan priests in England and chose a Benedictine abbot – **Basil Hume** – as the new archbishop of Westminster, the highest ranking Catholic prelate in that country. Later, as **Cardinal Hume**, he would visit St. Andrew Abbey in 1980.

In 1977, Pope Paul VI also named a Benedictine as archbishop of Milwaukee. There had never been a Benedictine bishop serving in the United States in the 20th century before that appointment. But by the time Bishop Roger was appointed auxiliary bishop in 2001, there were five other Benedictine bishops serving in U.S. dioceses.

The very next day after the episcopal ordination, **June 8, 2001**, the monks of the abbey turned their attention to electing a new abbot. **Fr. Clement Zeleznik, OSB '50**, the veteran popular BHS physics teacher and long-time novice master of the abbey, who had been serving as the associate pastor of Assumption Parish in Broadview Heights was elected as the fifth abbot of Saint Andrew's Abbey. The 69-year-old new abbot was blessed by **Bishop Roger** on **September 8, 2001**, the Feast of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the 74th anniversary of the first day of school at Benedictine High School in 1927.

The very next day, **September 9**, did not give the new bishop any time to relax as he boarded a plane with 30 pilgrims for his first trip to eastern Europe, recently freed from the Iron Curtain of communism. The pilgrims began their tour in the Czech Republic and on the second day, **September 11, 2001**, after Bishop Roger celebrated Mass at St. Adalbert's Benedictine Abbey, they received the shocking news of the terrorist attack against the **Twin Towers** in New York City. They were able to get their flight to Hungary before all planes were grounded for the time being.

On the Feast of the Sorrowful Mother, **September 15**, the patroness of Slovakia, the Benedictine pilgrims joined thousands at the national shrine of **Our Lady**



Abbot Clement with BHS alumni and noted Hollywood directors and producers Joe '89 (left) and Anthony '88 (right) Russo.

of **Sastin** in Slovakia with **Cardinal Jozef Tomko** (who died on August 21, 2022 at the age of 98) and many other bishops. The Slovak pilgrims applauded the Americans and wanted to shake their hands and pat their backs in support. The national Slovak Telephone Company gave the U.S. travelers four days of free calls to phone relatives in America.

Back in Cleveland, the new abbot also did not have time to relax. Abbot Clement inherited a **\$4.7 million capital campaign** called “Charting Excellence ... Navigating our Future” that was planned during the previous year with Abbot Roger. It was the second major capital campaign involving the school in 20 years. It sought to raise funds to strengthen the school’s endowment for student scholarships and faculty compensation and to renovate all the 1940 classrooms in the main building as well as to modernize the restrooms and repair the roof. The campaign would reach \$4 million by 2005.

Abbot Clement was a respected theologian and spiritual director and used every opportunity to deepen the spiritual life of his monks. He committed himself to give weekly conferences to the monastic community. He also wrote a spiritual column for the “**Ora et Labora**” publication of the abbey and high school. On **February 27, 2002**, the abbot was the featured guest on **EWTN’s national television program “Mother Angelica**



Monks in Sampor, Slovakia survey land for the first Benedictine monastery in centuries.

Live” with substitute host Fr. Mitch Pacwa, SJ. Abbot Clement explained the spirituality of **Venerable Concepcion Cabrera de Armida**, a Mexican mystic, wife, mother, and foundress of several religious orders in the 1920s whose diary of revelations about the priesthood he had translated from the original Spanish.

However much Abbot Clement wanted to focus on the spiritual life, he was repeatedly pulled back to focus on challenges facing the high school. **Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB ’71** had been named principal in 1999 and guided the high school through a tragic scandal

involving several star athletes in 2004, after overseeing a four year enrollment increase from **346 students** in September of 1999 to **458 students** in September of 2003. Investments suffered when the national economy struggled creating budget deficits which needed the influx of more and more fundraising dollars. At the same time, it was hard to maintain an effective advancement department which had the dual task of raising funds for both the abbey and high school.

In 2004 Abbot Clement asked the high school’s Board of Trustees to implement a change of administration by separating



*The new Benedictine monastery of the Transfiguration in Sampor, Slovakia and **Fr. Joachim** of our abbey speaking in Slovak at its dedication on May 24, 2010. **Bro. Gabriel** of our abbey, a native of Slovakia, accompanied Fr. Joachim*





Abbot Clement gives encouragement to **Abbot Christopher** at the time of his election on June 10, 2008.

the role and duties of the **president** of the school and the **principal** of the school. In 2004, he named **Fr. Albert Marflak, OSB**, who had been serving as prior of the monastery, as the president of Benedictine High School. Previous to this appointment, the president of BHS had always been the abbot. Under this new arrangement, the principal would focus on internal educational matters, while the president would take the responsibility of working with outside benefactors and long range planning along with the Advancement Director. Fr. Albert would hold the president's job for four years.

In the fall of 2005, **Mr. Sal Miroglotta** was named the second lay principal of Benedictine High School succeeding **Fr. Gerard** who took over as president when **Fr. Albert** finished his term. Over the next three years, Benedictine would give a strong emphasis on increasing the use of technology in the classroom. Alumnus **Mr. Joseph Gressock '66**, who actually was a son of **Saint Andrew's Parish**, returned to BHS as principal in the fall of 2008. During his six years in office, he focused on renewing a sense of pride for the Benedictine tradition among the students and instituted a Priory system which mixed 12 students of all four classes into deaneries to promote closer unity.

Already during Abbot Roger's years in office, the abbey also took steps to

strengthen its relationship with the Catholic Church in **Slovakia** which had miraculously emerged in 1989 from the grip of communism. In 1998, **Archbishop Alojz Tkac** of Kosice, Slovakia had visited Cleveland and helped initiate a program whereby each year two of his diocesan seminarians from Slovakia would spend nine months in Cleveland, experiencing monastic life at the abbey for three months, modern suburban parish life at the **Church of the Assumption** for three months, and social outreach at downtown **St. Malachi's Parish** for three months. The program continued successfully for a decade with **Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB** as the coordinator. All the Slovak seminarians who participated in this unique program, with the exception of one, persevered and were ordained priests in Slovakia.

Abbot Clement assumed office halfway through this program and encouraged it. Of full Slovak heritage from both parents, he traveled to Slovakia twice after his election. His first trip was from **September 29 to October 6, 2004** when his hosts were seminarians of the Diocese of Kosice who had gone through the nine-month program in Cleveland. He was accompanied by **Andrew Hudak, Jr.** who was the director of the **Slovak Institute** that is located at St. Andrew Abbey. Abbot Clement's second trip to Slovakia was in the fall of 2008 after his resignation as abbot.

The highlight of the first trip was visiting a new Benedictine monastery that recently had been founded in the town of **Bacurov** by three young Slovak diocesan priests who desired monastic life and wrote to St. Andrew Abbey after the fall of communism asking if several monks could be sent to Slovakia. Another option was for the three candidates to be trained at our abbey and then be sent back to start a Slovak monastery.

However, St. Andrew Abbey did not have the personnel needed for such a bi-lingual project. So, the three diocesan priests crossed the border and joined the Benedictine Abbey in **Tyniec, Poland**. After they made their year of novitiate formation and pronounced first vows, they were sent back into Slovakia to try and start a monastery – but with no money. They were given an abandoned rectory by a bishop in a town called **Bacurov** in central Slovakia. They grew their own vegetables and raised chickens.

As they increased to six monks, the bishop gave them a plot of land in the hill town of **Sampor** in which to build a new monastery. Abbot Clement welcomed one of the first members, **Fr. Jozef Brodnansky, OSB**, to live at St. Andrew Abbey for a year (2005-06) while raising money in the United States. Remarkably, only five years later, the main monastery building and chapel were completed and dedicated by the local bishop and the abbot from the Abbey of Tyniec in Poland. Abbot Clement sent **Fr. Joachim Pastirik, OSB**, who speaks fluent Slovak, and **Bro. Gabriel Balazovic, OSB** (a native of Slovakia) to represent him at the dedication on **May 24, 2010**.

Known as **Transfiguration Monastery**, the monks pursue a more contemplative life but also go out to give retreats and conferences. Under Abbot Clement, the community of St. Andrew Abbey made the decision to send a certain percentage of each donation received in Cleveland to Transfiguration Monastery until its building projects are completed. They now number 15 monks.

Elected at the age of 69, Abbot Clement increasingly had to deal with health issues as he began his seventh year as superior in 2008. At the celebration of



Fr. Albert poses with student ushers at a BHS Blue and White Gala.

St. Benedict's Day on April 1, 2008

(transferred from March 21 due to Holy Week), he announced that the Abbot President had accepted his request to resign. The 28 solemnly professed members of the monastic community met from June 9 -10 and elected **Fr. Christopher Schwartz, OSB**, 62, as the **sixth abbot** of St. Andrew Abbey. At the time of his election, Fr. Christopher was in his second year as the subprior, or third superior of the abbey. He had taught history at BHS from 1974-91 while also holding the positions of prior, director of monks in formation, and vocation director at various times. From 1991-2004, Fr. Christopher was the pastor of Assumption Parish in Broadview Heights and then served two years, 2004-2006, as chaplain to the Incarnate Word nuns in Parma Heights.

In his first act as superior, Abbot Christopher appointed **Fr. Gary Hoover, OSB**, as his prior and **Fr. Albert Marflak, OSB** as the new subprior. Fr. Gary had been serving as chaplain of Benedictine High School at the time and Fr. Albert had completed four years as the president of BHS. During his tenure as president, Fr. Albert had to deal with an alumni initiative, specifically from a select group of the Class of '78 to build a practice athletic field on the Benedictine campus. Those who initiated the concept felt that the long standing arrangement

of having BHS student athletes run down five or six blocks to Luke Easter Park (formerly Woodland Hills Park) after school in the fall and spring for sports' practice had become an obstacle for recruiting some students whose families felt it was not safe.

When legendary **Coach Augie Bossu** died on **January 1, 2008**, at the age of 91, a consensus emerged that the proposed athletic practice field be named in his honor. First, the proposed location of the field shifted from the large parking lot to the lower area that formed the abbey's backyard and where the Transportation Garage had been constructed in the 1970s as the bus fleet expanded.

Abbot Christopher had to get the approval of the monastic chapter first, since the proposed field would eliminate the privacy of that part of the abbey grounds. Secondly, the proposed cost of **\$2.25 million** that would cover the construction of the field itself as well as a pavilion honoring long time coach and athletic director, the late **Joe Rufus**, and a Walkway of Champions in honor of **Bishop Roger Gries, OSB '54** would necessitate a formal Capital Campaign at a time when the national economy was once again in crisis. Finally, the current Transportation Garage would have to be demolished and a new one constructed in the upper parking lot.

The monastic community gave approval in September 2008. The public kick-off of the campaign took place in the fall of 2009. For the next year and a half plans were made and a silent phase of solicitation took place. Finally, ground was broken on March 21, 2011 and construction began. Sufficient funds were raised for the basic **Bossu Field** and it was ready for use in the summer of 2012. Abbot Christopher blessed the field on the last day of school in June.

Having one of its own monks as a bishop presented new opportunities for Saint Andrew Abbey. Bishop Roger continued to make time in his schedule to preside at important alumni funerals and weddings and events at BHS. On **June 3, 2011**, history was made when one monk of the abbey ordained another monk as a priest. Bishop Roger ordained **Fr. Finbar Ramsak, OSB** in the Abbey Church.

Prior Gary had developed a successful Kairos retreat program at the high school since 2006 which involved the students spending several successive days on retreat. **Loyola of the Lake Retreat House** in Clinton, Ohio proved to be a popular location for the Kairos retreats because of its secluded location and 75 acres of land. It had been opened in the 1960s by the Jesuits and a lay board of directors who wanted a retreat house in the Akron area. For 44 years the Jesuits provided priests to

staff Loyola, but by 2008, because of a lack of available personnel, they decided to end their affiliation with the retreat house.

Prior Gary, representing **Abbot Christopher**, entered into discussions with **Becky Haller**, the director, and members of the Board of Trustees who now had full ownership of Loyola. By 2010 **Bishop Richard Lennon** of the Diocese of Cleveland gave full recognition to a new relationship between Loyola Retreat House (as it was now called) and the Benedictine Order of Cleveland who would serve as its sponsoring community. Two monks would be added to the Board of Trustees to oversee its Catholic identity. Monks would be invited to give retreats and conferences. From 2011 to 2018, retired **Abbot Clement Zeleznik, OSB** served as the chaplain-in-residence.

Toward the end of 2010, Abbot Christopher dealt with several serious health issues and requested permission from the Abbot President to take a six-month sabbatical to address them. The Abbot President appointed Prior Gary as the **administrator** of the abbey with full authority from January 7, 2011 to June 29, 2011.

When he returned, Abbot Christopher responded to a number of important personnel issues over the next two years. On July 25, 2011, he granted permission to **Fr. Anselm Zupka, OSB '58** to accept an appointment as the chaplain of **Walsh University** in Canton, Ohio (Youngstown Diocese). Leaving the faculty of BHS after 47 continuous years of teaching, Fr. Anselm became the first monk in the history of the abbey to serve full time as a **university chaplain**. He would remain at Walsh for the next five years.

The entire Benedictine community was shocked by the sudden death of **Fr. Albert Marflak, OSB '65** on May 26, 2012 who suffered a heart attack while tending flowers at the Marian grotto on the campus. The 65-year-old monk had been serving as the third superior of the abbey since stepping down as president of BHS in 2008. Before that appointment he was the abbey treasurer or business manager from 1994 to 2002. Ironically, almost one year later, on May

19, 2013, **Brother Theodore Girard, OSB '66**, Fr. Albert's successor as abbey treasurer in 2002, died in his sleep at the age of 65. He had spent most of his monastic life in the business office of either the high school or monastery. Both Fr. Albert and Bro. Theodore had been successors to long time treasurer of the abbey and high school **Fr. Placid Pientek, OSB '36**, who lived to become the oldest monk in the history of the abbey, dying on May 6, 2018, just two months short of his 100th birthday.

Shortly after Bro. Theodore's funeral, at the **2013** Benedictine High School graduation, Abbot Christopher announced that he would be stepping down as abbot later in the summer after five years in office. The abbot had undergone heart surgery in the fall of 2012. A special visitation from **Abbot President Hugh Anderson, OSB** took place from July 21-27. Because Abbot Hugh felt that the monastic community needed time before electing their third abbot in a dozen years, he re-appointed **Prior Gary Hoover, OSB '74** as the administrator of the abbey with full authority until an abbatial election would be scheduled. He would serve as administrator for the next year. He was assisted by **Fr. Joachim Pastirik, OSB '60**, who agreed to serve as the temporary prior and **Bro. Gabriel Balazovic, OSB**, who became the first brother to be given the position of subprior.

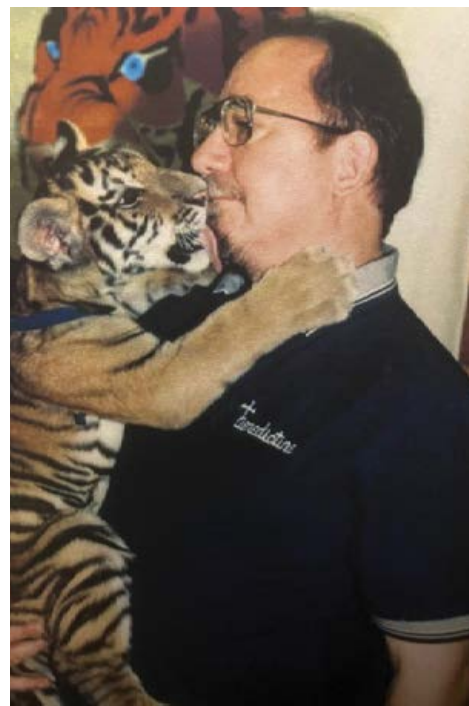
The delayed abbatial election was finally held on August 6, 2014 and **Prior Gary Hoover, OSB '74**, 58 years old, was elected as the 7th abbot of Saint Andrew Abbey. He was blessed by Cleveland Bishop Richard Lennon on October 5, 2014 at **St. Ambrose Church** in Brunswick where the new abbot had assisted on weekends for a number of years.

During his first five years in office, Abbot Gary experienced the blessing of seeing three monks ordained to the priesthood: **Fr. Thomas Sanders, OSB** (2016), **Fr. Louis Carey, OSB '88** (2018 – the first BHS alumnus ordained as a member of the abbey since Abbot Gary in 1983), and **Fr. Conrad Wald, OSB** (2019). He also supported the appointment of the first woman principal for Benedictine High School, **Mrs. Sue Zulantz**, the mother of

six BHS alumni, who stepped up in 2016 from being the assistant principal. She was also the first head of an all-male school in the Diocese of Cleveland. And in 2017, Abbot Gary appointed the first lay president of Benedictine High School, **Dr. Frank Bossu, '67**, oldest son of legendary Bengal football and baseball head coach, the late **Augie Bossu**.

To assist him in governance after his election, Abbot Gary appointed **Fr. Timothy Buyansky, OSB '60** as his prior. Fr. Timothy had also been the prior from 1991-1995. He retired as the BHS librarian and drama director in 2018 after 48 years on the BHS faculty, and continued to serve as prior until his unexpected death from cardiac complications on February 25, 2021 at the age of 78. He was the first prior of the abbey to die in office. Abbot Gary appointed **Bro. Peter Ancell, OSB** to succeed him. Bro. Peter became the first brother to hold the office of prior in the history of the abbey.

In 2016, the abbey began working with the Board of Trustees of the high



For nine years, beginning in 1998, Bro. Theodore had the most unusual monastic assignment of taking care of Bengal tiger cubs that functioned as mascots for the BHS football team. Bro. Ted's unexpected death a year after the death of Fr. Albert was a shock.



History was made on June 3, 2011 when one abbey monk (Bishop Roger) ordained a fellow abbey monk (Fr. Finbar).

school to formulate a meaningful way to celebrate the centennial of the arrival of the first monks in Cleveland in 1922. A strategic plan was developed for the high school based on the **Benedictine Hallmarks** of Hospitality, Stewardship, Conversion of Life, Stability, and Love of Christ and Neighbor. These characteristics taken from the Rule of St. Benedict have been used often in the last twenty years in Benedictine educational institutions to help preserve the Benedictine charism and spirit as less monks and nuns work in schools sponsored by their monastic communities.

Based on elements of the strategic plan, a professionally-directed feasibility study was utilized to see what physical improvements were possible. The resulting **Centennial Campaign** was launched with prudent Phase One goals: 1) to unify the abbey and school physically by creating the Rufus Courtyard in honor of former coach and athletic director **Joe Rufus**, 2) to provide a new, more welcoming entrance to the high school that would connect the main building with the science building, and 3) to replace the roof of the 1984 Abbey Church.

Abbot Gary explained, “These practical improvements have brought us to this point of celebrating our history with a view to the future.” Alumnus **Christopher Lorber ’04** was given new responsibilities as Vice-President for Advancement, while another alumnus **Ryan Ryzner ’95** returned as principal and later president of his Alma Mater. Together with Abbot Gary, they had the unprecedented job of figuring out how to bring the monastery and the high school safely through the disrupting and dangerous COVID-19 pandemic of the last few years.

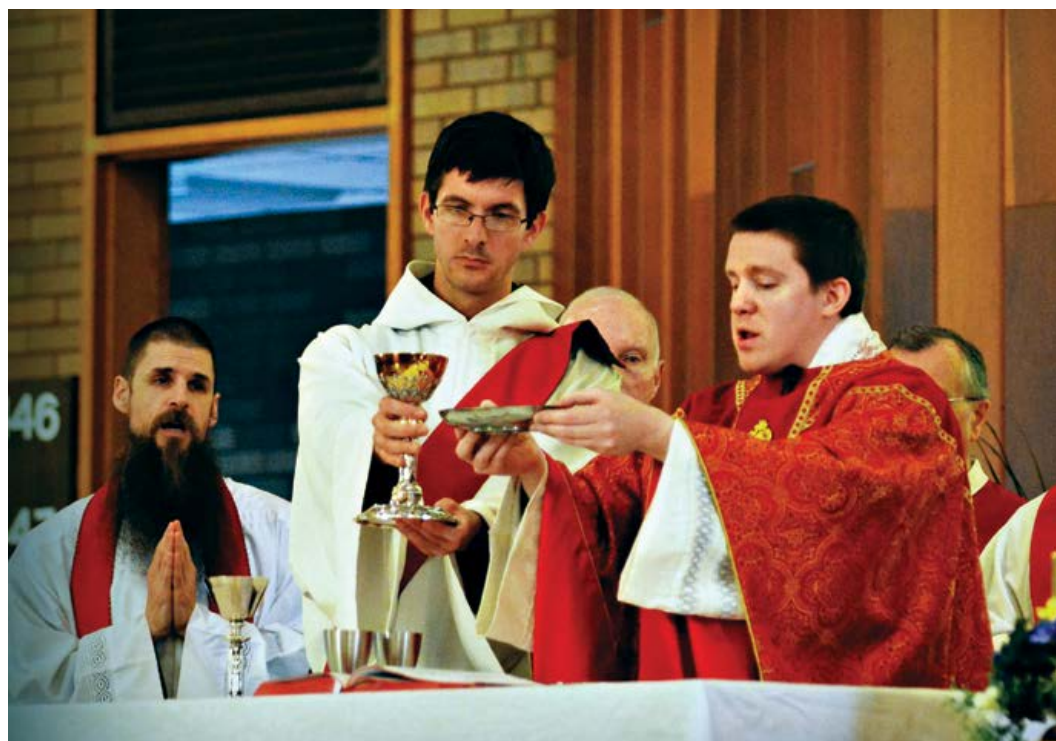
The pandemic interrupted a popular practice instituted by Abbot Gary in 2015 of having the monks from the abbey drive out to **Regina Health Center** on the first Wednesday afternoon of each month to share vespers and supper with any monks who are currently in residence there.

However, the COVID restrictions eased up enough as 2022 arrived and allowed the monastic community to hold a variety of ceremonies and celebrations to mark the **centennial** of the arrival of the first monks in Cleveland. **Bro. Simon Corrigan, OSB** and **Brother Gregory Coyne, OSB** made final and first commitments to monastic life on

February 5, 2022, the exact date of the arrival of Fr. Stanislaus Gmuca, OSB to Cleveland 100 years earlier. From June 6-10, 2022, the monks of Saint Andrew Abbey traveled by bus to Lisle, Illinois to make an historic combined retreat with the monks of **St. Procopius Abbey**. In July, **Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB**, **Fr. Justin Dyrwal, OSB**, **Fr. Finbar Ramsak, OSB**, and **Bro. Gregory Coyne, OSB** led a pilgrimage to locations in Italy and Slovakia associated with St. Benedict and St. Andrew Svorad, the patron saint of the abbey.

Still on the horizon for Abbot Gary and the monks of the abbey as they enter their second century in Cleveland will be decisions on how to best utilize space available in the **1952 wing of the abbey** and how to deepen the authentic Benedictine spirit of the abbey and the high school in an increasingly secular age that pays less and less attention to God.

A **prayer for vocations** is offered each evening by the monks with faith and hope that sufficient young men will respond to God’s call to become monks, especially **alumni of Benedictine High School** so that Benedictine monastic life will remain an effective presence in the Diocese of Cleveland for years to come. Fifteen



centuries earlier, a young Italian Christian named **Benedict** faced the same challenge while trying to live his faith in the closing years of the Roman Empire.

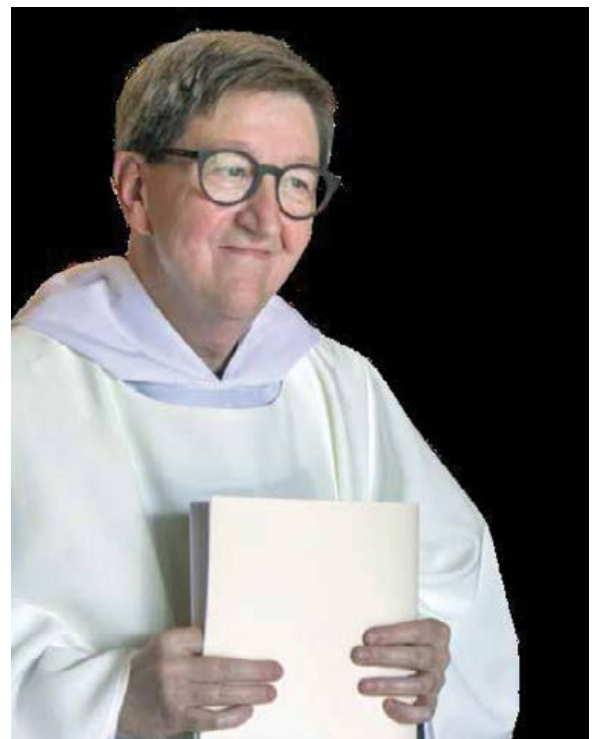
In this Centennial Year of 2022, another young Italian man of faith, named **Dominic Fanelli**, 33, the grandson of the late Augie Bossu, was named principal of Benedictine High School. He tries to start each morning by joining the monks for the Liturgy of the Hours and Mass and has encouraged members of the school and abbey to gather at the grotto of the Blessed Virgin for a rosary at noon each Friday. Indeed, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the tradition of Benedict continues ...



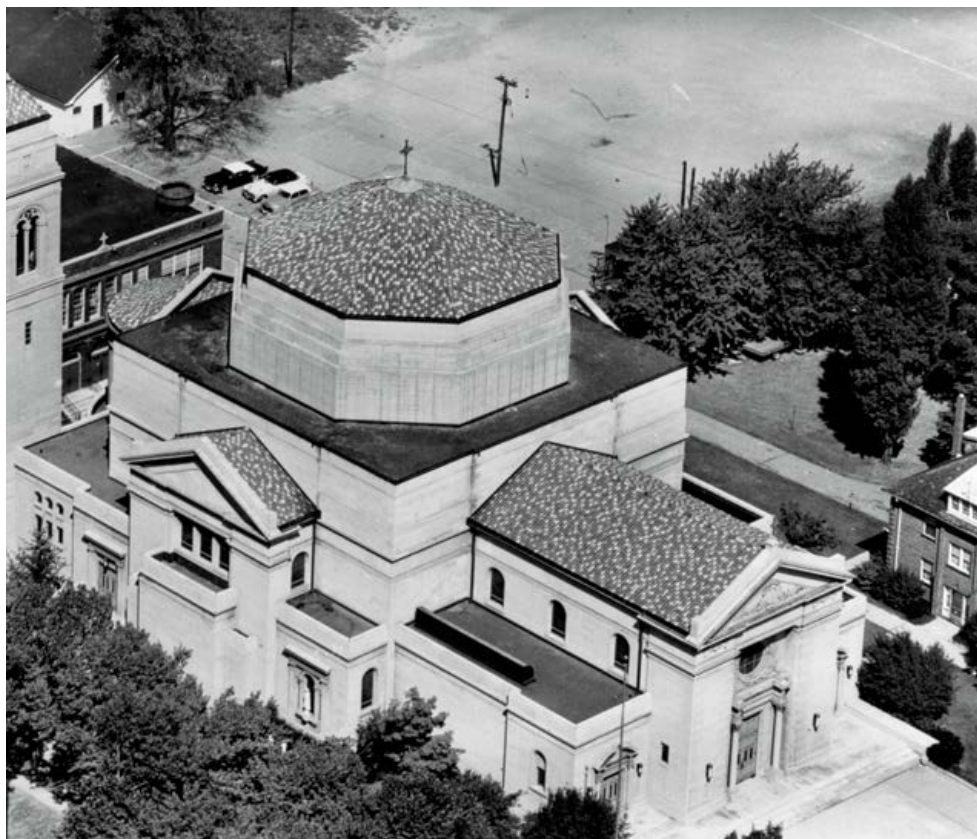
Abbot Gary and his parents, Ray and Dorothy Hoover, at the reception for his abbatial blessing on October 5, 2014.



Abbot Gary, Prior Timothy, and Bro. Mario with Kairos Retreat students at Loyola Retreat House.



The abbey was blessed with three ordinations between 2016-2019 (l-r): Fr. Thomas, Fr. Louis, and Fr. Conrad.



Aerial photo shows the size of St Benedict's Church when it was completed in 1953.



Fr. Leo Rehak, OSB, pastor from 1934 to 1959.

Looking Back at St. Benedict's

by Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71

From 1953 to 1993, many important events for Saint Andrew Abbey and Benedictine High School took place in the magnificent church of Saint Benedict's Parish on the corner of East Boulevard (now M.L. King Jr. Drive) and Lamontier Avenue. Since so many Benedictine alumni and friends have memories of this unique ecclesial structure that bordered on the BHS property, it is appropriate to re-visit this famous church with a Centennial Reflection.

Immigrants from Slovakia (then part of the Austro-Hungarian empire) began arriving in Cleveland in the 1880s. The first parish designated by the Cleveland Catholic Diocese to serve Slovak-Americans was St. Ladislav Parish which eventually built a church at East 92nd Street and Holton Avenue off lower Buckeye Road.

In 1922, the pastor of St. Ladislav Parish, Fr. Necid, built a church-hall combination at the site on East Boulevard (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive) as an extension of his parish. However, six years later in 1928, Bishop Joseph Schrembs established a new parish at that location with that

building dedicated to Saint Benedict Skalka, a Slovak monastic martyr. He entrusted the parish to the care of the Slovak Benedictine monks who had arrived in Cleveland at St. Andrew Parish on Superior Avenue in 1922. **Fr. Stanislaus Gmuca, OSB** was the first pastor.

In 1934 when Fr. Stanislaus was elected to be the first abbot of Saint Andrew Abbey, his assistant **Fr. Leo Rehak, OSB** became the second pastor of St. Benedict's Parish. The parish experienced rapid growth counting over 1500 families within the first 25 years. Plans for a new, larger church began in 1949 and a fundraising

drive was launched which raised \$1 million, a remarkable sum for that time and for the blue collar immigrant parish community.

The new St. Benedict's Church was dedicated on May 17, 1953 by Archbishop Edward F. Hoban. For that occasion, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* called the new sacred edifice "One of the finest examples of Roman Baroque architecture in the country." It was the largest Slovak Catholic parish in the United States and the new church seated 1,300.

The *Cleveland Catholic Universe Bulletin* headlined their story of the dedication as "**Parishioners of St. Benedict Complete 'Little Basilica.'**" The story began with this description, "The new St. Benedict Church, rising 144 feet to the tower cross, looks a good deal like St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The nave and the floor plan is the same as St. Peter's. And St. Benedict's also is topped by a cupola and has seven side chapels."



The magnificent high altar with golden mosaic baldachino was surrounded by a dynamic and colorfully painted depiction of the meeting of heaven and earth at each Eucharistic liturgy presided over by the Lamb of God as described in the Book of Revelation.

With its massive central dome, unique among Catholic churches in Cleveland, which was 61 feet in height from the base of the floor and 53 feet in diameter, St. Benedict's Church was well-suited for Benedictine graduations and other large gatherings besides Mass, because there were no pillars to block the view of the congregation.

However, all attention was focused on the beautiful high altar and illustrated apse. In all, 6,748 pieces of marble, weighing 120 tons, were used in the church interior. The marble high altar stood beneath a semi-global canopy of Botticino marble and inlaid gold mosaics. The canopy, or baldacchino, was supported by four huge white marble columns. In the center was a silver and gold symbol of the Holy Spirit framed by a shining wreath of flowers and thorns which was illuminated with lights during the celebration of Mass.

The semi-circular apse behind the high altar featured a breathtaking painted mural in striking colors which descended into the sanctuary as if coming down in the clouds from heaven. It depicted the meeting of heaven and earth during the Eucharist liturgy through which the faithful partake of the food of angels – the Body and Blood of Christ received in communion.

Yet, all this beauty was not enough to keep parishioners from moving out of the neighborhood in the succeeding decades. In the early 1960s newly-married couples and young families chose to purchase single family homes in the new suburbs of Maple Heights, Garfield Heights, and Parma instead of the older style two-family homes of the Buckeye area.

In the 1970s and 80s, population shifts caused more St. Benedict parishioners to move elsewhere. For a while, some dedicated families would return to the old neighborhood for weekend Mass, but it was not enough to keep the parish alive. With 110 registered members, the parish was closed in 1993. The parish buildings including the church were sold by the Cleveland Diocese to the congregation of the Cathedral Church of God in Christ, which it is called to the present.



Admiring the rose window of St. Benedict the Patriarch of Monks that is now located in the narthex of the abbey are **Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71** (left) who saw the window while attending St. Benedict's School from 1960-67 and V.P. for Advancement **Chris Lorber '04** who entered St. Gregory the Great School under that window from 1993-2000.

When the diocese sells a Catholic church, it removes all sacred objects like statues and stained glass windows. It catalogues these items in a warehouse and makes them available for purchase by churches both in town and out-of-town. So, St. Benedict's Church continues to live in a variety of locations today.

The majestic high altar with its golden baldacchino can be found in the St. Benedict Mausoleum at Holy Cross Cemetery on Brookpark Road near the entrance gates. The marble shrines dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Ann are located in the back of St. Gregory's Church of Sacred Heart Parish in South Euclid. The large paintings of St. Benedict of Nursia with St. Benedict Skalka and St. Scholastica with St. Gertrude now hang in the abbey calefactory. The striking gold-leafed wooden carved statue of Mary with the Child Jesus that stood in the baptistry at St. Benedict's is now to be found in the abbey parlor. Other sacred windows and objects from St. Benedict's can be found in a number of local churches.

Recently, the abbey was able to purchase the beautiful rose window that depicts St. Benedict the Patriarch of monks which was located high above the main entrance of the church. It had been purchased by



The high altar from St. Benedict's Church can be found today in the St. Benedict Mausoleum inside the main gate of Holy Cross Cemetery on Brookpark Road.

Msgr. William Novicky and installed over the entrance doors of St. Gregory's Elementary School in South Euclid. When the school merged with St. Clare's in 2016 and subsequently sold, the current pastor Fr. David Ireland notified the abbey that the rose window was available. The abbey purchased it from Henninger's Religious Goods which installed it in the abbey church narthex.

Remaining in the Neighborhood – the Decision of 1979

by Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71

It began on a Sunday morning in August. Two social communities in the Buckeye neighborhood of Cleveland had been slinging verbal insults at each other for weeks. Finally, a pistol was brandished and police were called from their nearby district headquarters to disperse the crowd before anyone was seriously injured. The police remained on high alert for the rest of the month after several more riots broke out.

Are we talking about the 2020 “**Summer of Discontent**” that originated with the shocking death of George Floyd in Minneapolis and which soon spread riots throughout the country with the theme of racism? No, the riots described above took place in the Buckeye neighborhood in Cleveland in the summer of 1891 as Slovak and Hungarian immigrants verbally and physically fought over control of St. Ladislaus Church on Holton Avenue. Hard feelings carried over the ocean from national hostilities in Europe.

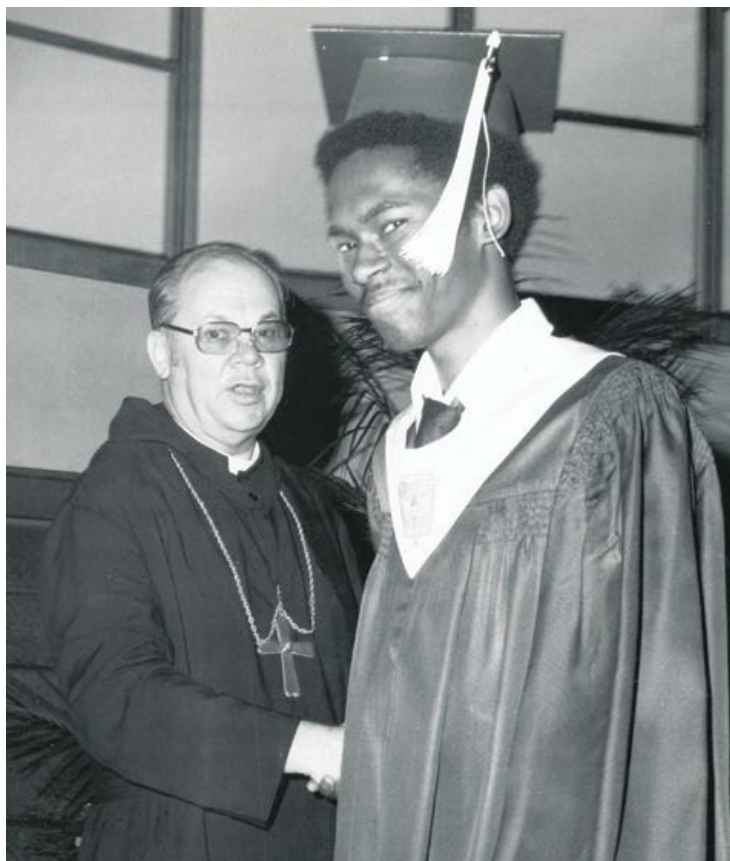
Thirty years later in 1922, Slovak Benedictine monks from Chicago arrived in Cleveland to establish a secondary school that would move to the Buckeye neighborhood five years later to serve the sons of Slovak immigrants. However, from the day it opened its doors in 1927, Benedictine High School reflected the **Benedictine Hallmark of Hospitality** and welcomed students of all nationalities and races. Ironically, the first graduate to receive a diploma in the first graduation class in 1931 was Hungarian – Edward Bartko from St. Elizabeth’s Parish – who actually spoke at the 2002 BHS Commencement Ceremony at St. John’s Cathedral.



Robert Derritt of the Class of 1938, first African-American graduate of BHS.

performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

Very early in its 93-year history, Benedictine High School was racially integrated. In 1934, **Robert Derritt** became the first African-American student to enroll and graduate from BHS. He ranked academically 8th out of his class of 32 students in 1938. Two years later, **Stanford Berry** and his brother **Leon** would enroll from Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Elementary School. Stanford became a U.S. Customs Inspector and Leon went on to become a professional singer who several times



Abbot Jerome congratulates National Honor Society graduate Anthony Morgan '75.

Yet, until the late 1960s when “white flight” hit the City of Cleveland and especially the Buckeye neighborhood, Benedictine High School, though racially integrated, claimed a majority white student population with many coming from nearby Slovak, Hungarian, and Italian parish schools. However, panic set in when the total enrollment suddenly dropped from 914 in 1966 to 402 a decade later in 1976. The Hough riots in 1966 caused many ethnic neighborhoods in Cleveland to collapse along with their parish schools.

Many BHS alumni and benefactors urged the monks to move the high school and monastery to the suburbs which were growing with the influx of white families fleeing the riot-torn city. There was even a division of opinion within the monastic community with fears that the high school would be forced to close if the enrollment continued to fall.

A headline for a story in the *Cleveland Press* on April 16, 1975 read **“Benedictine to remain open with enrollment and cash woes.”** The adjacent photo and story was about long-time rival Cathedral Latin High School on East 107th Street. At a meeting attended by 500 parents and students, the Cathedral Latin school president announced that the Marianist religious order had decided to close the school because of a similar drop in enrollment.

Abbot Jerome Koval, OSB was quoted in the Benedictine story as stating that BHS would not close, “If we run into a financial squeeze our men (the 25 teaching monks at the time) may have to make a bigger sacrifice than they make already.” Principal **Fr. Roger Gries, OSB ’54**, said in the same article, “There is no question of us moving....we will just have to find more students because it’s unlikely that parents can pay much more than the \$600 a year tuition.”

Benedictine did find more students by expanding bus service from one route in the eastern suburbs to nine routes by 1980. **Fr. Norbert Ozimek, OSB** learned to repair the buses and vans to save money and was also named Recruitment Director. The enrollment began to grow by 1977 when it reached 460 students.

Ironically, Benedictine saved its life by promoting racial integration facilitated by voluntary busing at the exact time that court-ordered racial desegregation of public schools by forced busing was ordered in major cities in the United States. In the 1970s, forced busing of public school students started with Boston and reached Cleveland by 1979 amid great controversy and often violence. Yet, at exactly the same time, white suburban students started freely coming into the city on buses to attend a racially integrated Benedictine. With God all things are possible!

Abbot Jerome called the monastic community to commit to a year of prayerful discernment in 1978 concerning the question of whether the abbey and high school should move to a suburban location. In addition to special prayers, community discussions took place during that year, some with outside presenters.

At the annual celebration of the feast of Saint Benedict, on **March 21, 1979**, in the presence of Cleveland Bishop James Hickey and over 200 priests, Abbot Jerome announced that the Benedictines would remain in the Buckeye neighborhood as a sign of the special Benedictine vow of *Stability*. He also pointed out that the monks saw a sign of God’s will in the steady increase in enrollment for BHS over the past five years to a high of 505 students with 186 freshmen.

And while 15 other Benedictine monasteries experienced declines in membership as high as 40% between 1966 and 1976, Saint Andrew Abbey actually grew from 64 monks in 1966 to 65 monks in 1976 despite 11 deaths during that decade. This was also considered a sign.

A new mission statement for BHS released that day stated, “We believe that by committing ourselves, within the City of Cleveland and Diocese of Cleveland, to the education of young men who demonstrate the desire and academic potential for college studies, Benedictine High School will provide experiences



Alumnus Charles Reynolds ’56 became BHS principal in 1994 and the first African-American Catholic high school principal in the Diocese of Cleveland.



Cleveland Press article from April 16, 1975 expressed concern whether Benedictine could stay open after Cathedral Latin said it would close.

which will heighten the awareness of these young men in the areas of community stability, social justice, cultural diversity, and evangelization while respecting and acknowledging religious diversity.”

Four decades later, that prophetic decision in 1979 still finds the Home of Champions open and working effectively to help students of different races, ethnicities, economic levels, and neighborhoods to recognize that they are all children of God. It is not an easy task and over the years there have been tensions, but overall Benedictine has become known as a welcoming community, and an island of understanding in a city often torn by division and fear. And with God’s continued help and the support of alumni and friends, this miracle can endure.

Regina Health Center

The monks of Saint Andrew Abbey have developed a practice of faithfully visiting their confreres at Regina Health Center every first Wednesday of the month. Regina Health Center is located at 5232 Broadview Road in Richfield, Ohio. The spacious grounds and handsome complex of buildings was originally built in 1957 as the motherhouse for the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, a religious order of nuns who have ministered in the Diocese of Cleveland since 1851.

Recognizing the growing need for long term health care of other religious communities in the diocese for their aging members, the Sisters decided in the early 1990s to convert part of their motherhouse into a facility where members of different religious orders could receive various levels of care. It is the first inter-community health care facility of its kind in the country. Previously, religious communities cared for their sick and elderly in their own motherhouse or monastery.

Saint Andrew Abbey built a twelve room infirmary in 1984 that served the monks well for over 25 years. However, the lack of full-time nursing personnel and the need for twenty-four hour supervision caused the monks to move individuals with special care needs to Regina in the late 1990s. Over 20 other religious communities have done likewise.

Thirteen monks of Saint Andrew Abbey have been cared for at Regina Health Center including current residents **Fr. Joachim Pastirik, OSB, 76;** and **Abbot Christopher Schwartz, OSB, 71.** You can reach our monks at Regina by calling **330-659-4161** and asking for them by name.



Every first Wednesday of the month, the 17 resident monks at the abbey drive to Regina Health Center and celebrate evening prayer (vespers) with their confreres and enjoy supper together. Some of the Regina monks periodically visit the abbey. Relatives and friends of the monks who live at Regina may also visit them.



2018

The monks of Saint Andrew Abbey gather with their confreres at Regina Health Center during one of their first Wednesday of the month visits. (Seated L-R): Fr. Joachim Pastirik, Fr. Dominic Mondzelewski, Prior Timothy Buyansky, Abbot Gary Hoover, Fr. Placid Pientek, Abbot Christopher Schwartz. (Standing L-R): Fr. Gerard Gonda, Bro. Philip Petrow, Fr. Dismas Boeff, Fr. Bede Kotlinski, Fr. Louis Carey, Fr. Anselm Zupka, Bro. Peter Ancell, Fr. Paschal Petcavage, Fr. Thomas Sanders, Fr. Justin Dyrwal, Bro. Mario Parisi, Fr. Finbar Ramsak, Bro. Conrad Wald, Bro. Gabriel Balazovic.

Missing from the photo: Abbot Roger Gries, Abbot Clement Zeleznik, Fr. Kenneth Katricak, Fr. Michael Brunovsky, Bro. Nicholas Spisak, and Novice Simon Corrigan.

Newest Monks Profess Commitments

One hundred years to the day that the first Benedictine monk, Fr. Stanislaus Gmuca, OSB, arrived in Cleveland, the two newest members of St. Andrew Abbey made formal commitments during a Mass at the monastery on Saturday, February 5, 2022. Celebrating the gift of new vocations that will impact the future was a significant way to begin the Centennial Year activities for the abbey.

Brother Simon Corrigan, OSB professed his solemn vows by which he promised to live as a Benedictine monk for the rest of his life. Brother Simon, 41, was born in Medina as the son of Thomas (deceased) and Cheryl Corrigan. His mother and his sister Lizabeth now live in Columbus. His baptismal name was Thomas. The family lived in Our Lady of Grace Parish in Hinckley where Tom got involved in various parish activities.

He was a 1998 graduate of Highland High School in Medina and then studied at the University of Akron where he earned his bachelor of science degree in biology in 2003. Working in a variety of jobs after graduation, he earned a diploma from the Ohio Center for Broadcasting in 2010. However, as he grew deeper in his Catholic faith, especially by reading the lives of the saints, he desired a lifestyle that would allow him the time and space to draw closer to Christ.

Tom first heard of St. Andrew Abbey and Benedictine monastic life from notices in his parish bulletin about a “Living with Benedict” retreat weekend at the abbey. He attended that weekend and enjoyed the experience so he kept in contact with Fr. Thomas Sanders, OSB, the abbey’s vocation director. He continued periodic visits to the abbey and applied to become a postulant in 2017.

After six months of postulancy, he was accepted as a novice and received the religious name of “Simon” after Simon of Cyrene who helped Jesus to carry his cross to Calvary. A year later he professed his first vows, valid for three years, on January 26, 2019.

For the last three years, Brother Simon has learned from **Brother Gabriel Balazovic**,



Bro. Simon Corrigan, OSB

Bro. Gregory Coyne, OSB

OSB the duties of the sacristan, the monk who is assigned to care for the sacred vessels and vestments used at liturgies or church ceremonies and how to prepare the abbey church for special events. Brother Simon was named to succeed Brother Gabriel as sacristan in the summer of 2020.

Also in the past year, Brother Simon has been taking classes in Hospitality Management at Cuyahoga Community College in preparation for working with the abbey’s food service. On a daily basis, he also works in basic maintenance of the abbey buildings and grounds.

Known for his deep, baritone voice, Brother Simon enjoys the blend of contemplative prayer and active work that is characteristic of Benedictine life. Quiet by nature, Brother Simon, nevertheless, is a good community member and a regular at the weekly UNO card game during the Abbey Wednesday recreation. He is also attentive to greet all visitors to the abbey

with genuine Benedictine hospitality.

At the same Mass celebrated by **Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB** on February 5, **Brother Gregory Coyne, OSB** made his first commitment or oblation. Born in Lakewood, Ohio, he is the son of Tim and Mary Jo Coyne and has two brothers and six sisters. He was baptized Seamus Coyne in the former St. Rose of Lima Church in Cleveland. Up to the 8th grade, he attended Padre Pio Academy, a private, independent school in Lakewood that teaches a classical curriculum and was founded by lay Catholics.

Seamus then attended the former St. Gregory’s Academy in Elmhurst Township, Pennsylvania where he played on their state championship rugby team. He continued his education at Christendom College at Front Royal, Virginia, where he helped coach their national championship rugby team in 2017. He traveled and worked in a variety of jobs before coming to St. Andrew Abbey as a postulant in the summer of 2020.



Bro. Gregory's family (l-r): Brigid, Mary Therese, Bernadette, Aaron Butler (brother-in-law), Bro. Gregory, Katie Butler with baby Radha and Megan, (behind center) parents – Mary Jo and Tim, Margaret, Connor, Madeleine (sister-in-law) holding baby Jack and carrying baby Finbar with Lucy in front, Deidre (sister-in-law), and Denton.



Bro. Simon and his family (l-r): Aunt Cindy Coykendale, Uncle Chuck Coykendale, Lizabeth (sister), and Cheryl (mom).

He was invested as a novice and received the religious name of “Gregory” on October 30, 2020. He knew about the abbey, in part, because of the support that is extended by the monks to the Cleveland Pro-Life community. During his novitiate year, Brother Gregory was given permission on Sundays to pray in front of the last remaining abortion clinic on Shaker Boulevard and to offer sidewalk

counseling to those seeking an abortion. He has a special interest in defending the unborn as well as persons with disabilities.

Brother Gregory, who is 28 years old, is currently taking classes at Lakeland Community College and is open to serving in whatever way is needed in the apostolic work of the abbey. He also sees great possibilities for future Bengal rugby.

SAVE THE DATE!

100 YEARS

Sunday, September 18, 2022

Please mark your calendars to join the Monks of Saint Andrew Abbey for their 100th Anniversary celebrations on Sunday, September 18, 2022: Solemn Mass at Assumption Parish at 3:00 PM followed by the Gala Centennial banquet at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Independence.

BEHIND THE SCENES:

The Slovak Institute Located at St. Andrew Abbey

Did you know the Slovak Institute Library is located in St. Andrew Abbey?

The Slovak Institute was created after WWII on September 15, 1952 by six founding fathers:

1. Fr. Andrew Pier, OSB
2. Dr. Karl Strmen
3. Dr. Frantisek Hrusovsky
4. Abbot Theodore Kojis, OSB
5. Dr. Joseph Cincek
6. Fr. Mikolas Sprinc

It was created to preserve and keep a rich history safe and available for all to benefit. Slovak individuals sent books, old maps, traditional clothing and family bibles to the Institute for safe-keeping when the communist party came to Slovakia. The Slovak Institute houses a collection of history that is unparalleled to any other museum's collection. Families all over the United States travel to Cleveland to reconnect to their Slovak heritage.

The Institute has had many individuals make the pilgrimage from Slovakia to Cleveland to learn more about their past. Individuals have come to do research for books they are writing, to study, and work on college thesis work. When visited by individuals from Slovakia, they all say the same thing: "There is more valuable history at the Slovak Institute than what we can find in our own country."

Fr. Andrew Pier, OSB was the director of the Slovak Institute for over 40 years. **Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius** from Danville, Pennsylvania helped Fr. Andrew in the summers. Upon his retirement in the mid-1990s, **Mr. Andrew F. Hudak, Jr.** took over, assisted by **Mr. Joseph Hornack '51**. They worked hard to make the Slovak Institute better known until their retirement in 2015.

Today, the Slovak Institute is placed under the watchful eye of Milan Kobulsky. Milan has been overseeing the Institute since August 2016. He cares for the past memories and with a great sense of pride he educates visitors on Slovakia history and customs.



The Slovak Institute, located on the second floor of the abbey, houses thousands of books, maps, clothing, and other artifacts traditional to Slovak heritage.

Saint Andrew Abbey

CENTENNIAL EVENTS 2022



Monks of St. Andrew Abbey and St. Procopius Abbey in Lisle, Illinois join together for an historic retreat in Lisle from June 6-10, 2022.

The monks of St. Andrew Abbey have been marking their 100th year in Cleveland with a variety of interesting and even historic events since January. On **Saturday, February 5, 2022**, the actual 100th anniversary of the arrival of the first Benedictine monk in Cleveland, two new monks made commitments to monastic life: **Bro. Simon Corrigan, OSB, 41**, and **Bro. Gregory Coyne, OSB, 28**.

The annual celebration of the traditional feast of the **Passing of St. Benedict** took place on **Sunday, March 20, 2022**

featuring an afternoon Holy Hour for Vocations in the Abbey Church with Eucharistic exposition and Benediction. Reflections were read by alumnus **Fr. Johnnie Smith '59** of Geneva and alumnus **Fr. Louis Carey, OSB '88** of Broadview Heights, alumnus **Deacon Ken Piechowski '66**, **Deacon Timothy Shell** (father of alumnus **Jonathan '19**, now a seminarian at Borromeo Seminary), **Ursuline Sister Marie Ellen Kuhel, OSU**, and **Notre Dame Sister Mary Brendon Zajac, SND** (former BHS Board of Trustee member). Priests,

deacons, and members of local religious orders attended and enjoyed a meal following the Holy Hour in the BHS Dining Hall.

On **Monday, June 6**, the monks of St. Andrew Abbey boarded a chartered bus and traveled to St. Procopius Abbey in Lisle, Illinois, the abbey which sent the first Benedictine monks to Cleveland 100 years ago. For five days, the Cleveland monks and the St. Procopius monks participated in a **joint annual retreat**, believed to be the first of its kind among Benedictine monasteries.



The chapel at St. Procopius Abbey is filled with monks from both abbeys.

Abbot Austin Murphy, OSB and the monks of St. Procopius Abbey showed genuine Benedictine hospitality in welcoming the monks of their daughter house back home. The joint retreat was preached by noted Benedictine historian **Fr. Joel Ripinger, OSB** of Marmion Abbey in Aurora, Illinois. The Cleveland monks also laid a wreath at the grave of **Abbot Valentine Kohlbeck, OSB** who made the decision to send the monks to Cleveland in 1922 (see page 5). They also made side trips to visit the Benedictine Convent in nearby **Tinley Park** and **St. Michael's Parish** in Chicago where Cleveland Benedictine monks served for many years.

In the foot steps of St. Benedict and St. Andrew Svorad

The most ambitious and historic of all the special events celebrating the centennial of Saint Andrew Abbey took place from July 2 – July 15 when Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB of the abbey and Fr. Justin Dyrwal, OSB, pastor of Assumption Parish in Broadview Heights, Ohio led a group of 17 pilgrims, including Fr. Finbar Ramsak, OSB and Bro. Gregory Coyne, OSB on a European Tour visiting important places associated with St. Benedict of Nursia, founder of the Benedictine Order (480-540 AD) in Italy and with Sts. Andrew Svorad and Benedict Skalka, patrons of St. Andrew Abbey in Slovakia.

**Continued on the next page*



Above: Fr. Michael, Bro. Gregory, Fr. Justin, and Fr. Finbar pose in front of the famous statue of Saint Benedict at his mountain-top Abbey of Monte Cassino southeast of Rome where he is buried.

Right: The 2022 European Heritage Centennial Benedictine pilgrims from Cleveland pose in front of the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome.



Above: Centennial confreres on pilgrimage at the Vatican museums: (l-r): Fr. Michael, Fr. Justin, Bro. Gregory, and Fr. Finbar.

Left: Bro. Gregory and Fr. Michael in front of the Roman Coliseum.

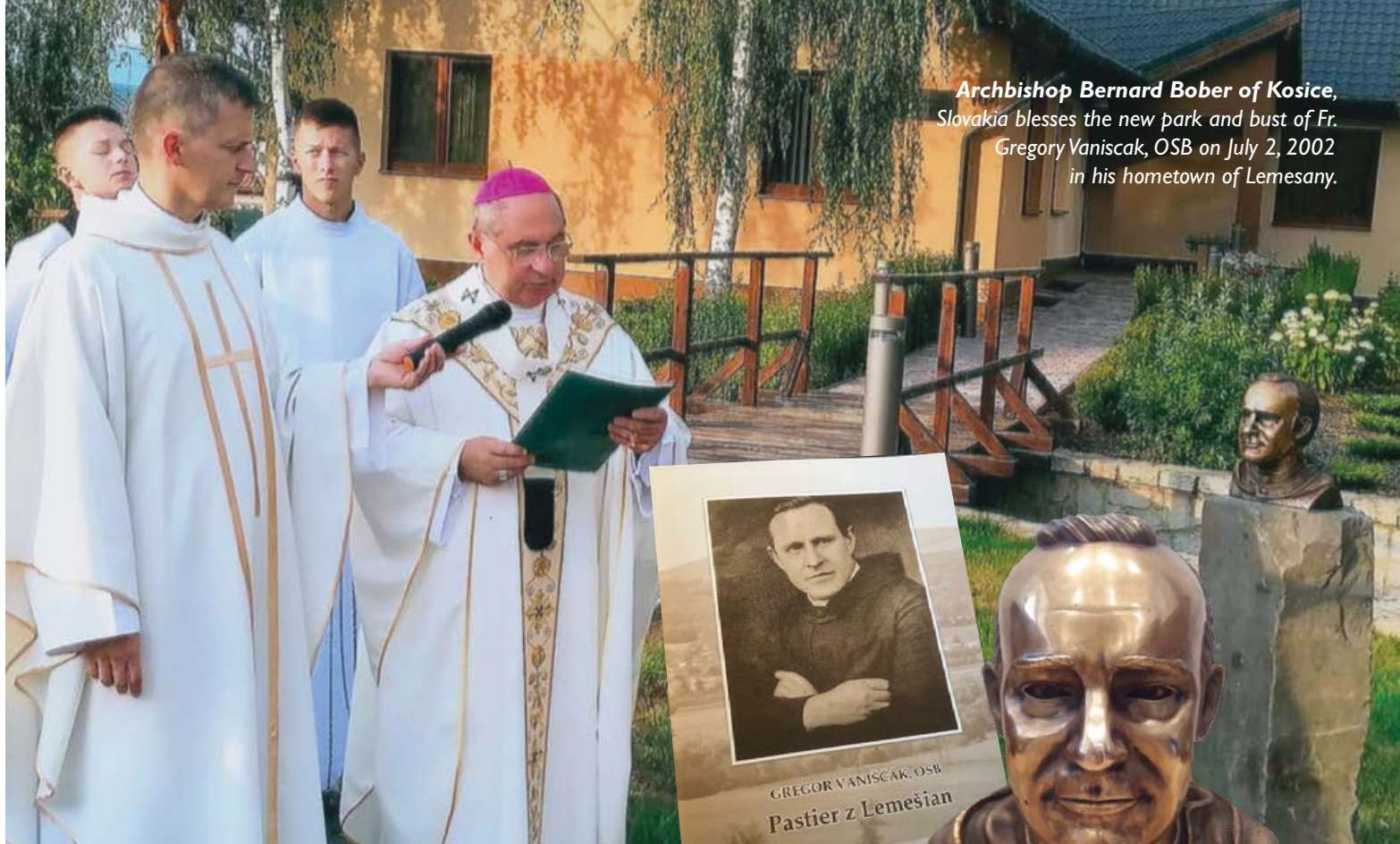


Two days after returning, the traveling monks joined **Bishop Roger Gries, OSB '54, Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB '74** and a group of their confreres to pray vespers (evening prayer) for the Solemnity of Sts. Andrew and Benedict, **July 17**, the titular feast of St. Andrew Abbey at a unique and scenic location on the shore of Lake Erie at the beautiful Bay Village home of **Bob and Lori Campana** who also provided a delicious meal for the monks in honor of the Abbey Centennial.

Right: Monks praying vespers on July 17 in the home of Bob and Lori Campana.

Below: The Benedictine pilgrims after they celebrated Mass in the beautiful and historic cathedral in Nitra, Slovakia.





Archbishop Bernard Bober of Kosice, Slovakia blesses the new park and bust of Fr. Gregory Vaniscak, OSB on July 2, 2002 in his hometown of Lemesany.

Abbey Founder Honored in Slovakia

It is certainly true that every Benedictine monastery and educational institution has an international character because the Benedictine order is over 1500 years old and is located in every corner of the globe. However, St. Andrew Abbey has a new, unique connection over the ocean and in the little town of Lemesany in the Presov region of eastern Slovakia.

It was in this picturesque town that John Vaniscak was born July 24, 1884. While tending sheep as a boy, he dreamed about becoming a “shepherd of souls” in the future as a priest. God’s providence would help him to cross the ocean and join his uncle in Johnstown, Pennsylvania around the turn of the century. There he met several American-Slovak priests who helped him to enroll at St. Procopius College in Lisle, Illinois. The rest is history as it has been related in the last three issues of “Ora et Labora.” John became “Fr. Gregory” and is considered the primary founder of St. Andrew Abbey.

In July of 2020, Fr. Peter Lazor, the pastor of the parish of St. Martin in Lemesany wrote to St. Andrew Abbey explaining that the parish recently built a new church and rectory and the town is creating a park that would be named in honor of Fr. Gregory Vaniscak, OSB, their native son. He asked for photographs of Fr. Gregory from which a bust could be commissioned for the park.

Fr. Michael and Fr. Gerard sent Fr. Lazor a number of articles in Slovak and in English about Fr. Gregory as well as a number of photos. They included photos of the famous bronze bust of Fr. Gregory that was created for St. Andrew Abbey by the noted immigrant Italian artist Ugo Graziotti in 1949. It now stands outside the Advancement Office at the abbey.

Despite delays due to the COVID closures, the bust and the park were completed and dedicated by Archbishop Bernard Bober of Kosice, Slovakia on July 2, 2022. He also dedicated the new church and blessed the new rectory. However, Fr. Lazor went even further in honoring Fr. Gregory by publishing a beautiful booklet of his life and accomplishments complete with photos of the current Benedictine campus in Cleveland as well as historical photos. Funds generated by the sale of the booklet will be used to help renovate the old historical church in the village.

Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of this booklet should contact Fr. Lazor by e-mail at: farnostlemesany@gmail.com. The booklet is 20 pages long and is in Slovak.

THE MONKS OF SAINT ANDREW ABBEY

2022



Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB

Professed 1977 / Ordained 1983 / Elected 2014

Abbot and Chancellor of Benedictine High School / Abbey Senior Council / BHS Board of Trustees / Loyola Retreat House Board / Diocesan confirmations / weekend assistance at St. Ambrose and St. Colette Parishes, Brunswick / Slovak Catholic Federation Board / Benedictine Order of Cleveland Office of Mission Integration / Episcopal Protector Ladies Pennsylvania Slovak Catholic Union



Bishop Roger Gries, OSB

**Professed 1957 / Ordained Priest 1963 / Elected Abbot 1981
Ordained Bishop 2001**

Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Cleveland / Retired Fourth Abbot of Saint Andrew Abbey / In residence at the abbey



Abbot Christopher Schwartz, OSB

Professed 1973 / Ordained 1974 / Elected 2008 / Resigned 2013

Retired Sixth Abbot of Saint Andrew Abbey / in residence at Regina Health Center



Prior Peter Ancell, OSB

Professed 1978

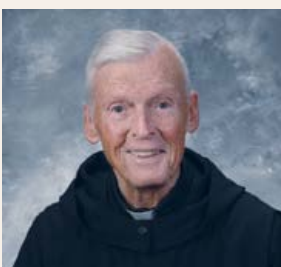
Prior and Health Delegate / Abbey Senior Council / Loyola Retreat House Board / abbey barber / Monastic Greater Cleveland Community Liaison / Alliance for International Monasticism (A.I.M.)



Subprior Michael Brunovsky, OSB

Professed 1985 / Ordained 1993

Subprior / Formation Director / Abbey Music Director and organist / BHS faculty / Benedictine Order of Cleveland Office of Mission Integration / Archivist / Abbey Senior Council / Executive Secretary BHS Board of Trustees / Slovak Catholic Federation Board / Weekend assistance at St. Adalbert Parish, Berea / Pastoral Assistant Byzantine Eparchy of Parma / Chaplain Slovak Radio and Slovak Heritage Society / Secretary-Treasurer Slovak Cultural Gardens



Fr. Anselm Zupka, OSB

Professed 1961 / Ordained 1967

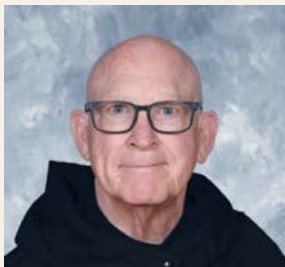
German teacher BHS / Mass Stipend Director / Abbey Senior Council / Weekend assistance at St. Charles Borromeo, Parma (since 1967) / Secretary to the Chapter



Fr. Joachim Pastirik, OSB

Professed 1963 / Ordained 1969

Retired art teacher at BHS / in residence at Regina Health Center



Fr. Dismas Boeff, OSB

Professed 1967 / Ordained 1976

Addiction recovery counselor / Pastoral Assistant



Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB

Professed 1974 / Ordained 1980

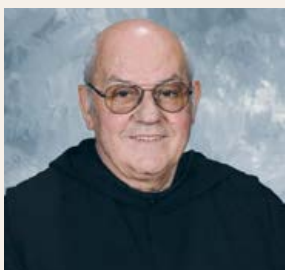
Advancement Office for the abbey and high school / donor relations / editor of the ORA et LABORA magazine / abbey archivist and Centennial Chairman / Board of the Slovak Catholic Federation / Weekend Assistance, Holy Trinity Parish, Avon (1980-2018)



Bro. Philip Petrow, OSB

Professed 1974

Abbey Guest Master / HVAC Coordinator / Website manager / Social Security Ombudsman / Community Energy Savings Ombudsman



Bro. Gabriel Balazovic, OSB

Professed 1981

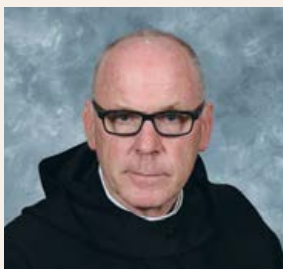
Grounds maintenance and security / assistant abbey sacristan / Board of the Slovak Catholic Federation



Fr. Kenneth Katricak, OSB

Professed 1979 / Ordained 1983

Mental Health Counselor / Elyria, Ohio / Weekend assistance at Lorain County Parishes / In residence at St. Anthony's Parish in Lorain



Fr. Bede Kotlinski, OSB

Professed 1982 / Ordained 1985

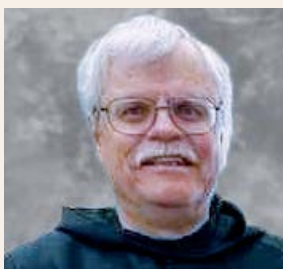
BHS teacher of Classical Languages / Abbey Master of Ceremonies / Abbey Senior Council / Oblate Director / Liturgical assistance at St. Stephen's Parish and Immaculate Conception Parish in Cleveland along with celebration of the Latin Mass at designated churches in the diocese



Fr. Justin Dyrwal, OSB

Professed 1992 / Ordained 1998

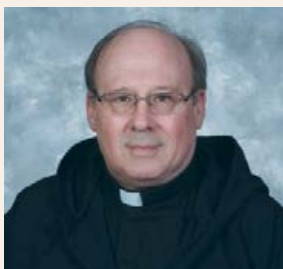
Pastor, Assumption Parish, Broadview Heights, Ohio / Latin Mass assistant



Bro. Nicholas Spisak, OSB

Professed 1993

Car fleet supervisor / grounds maintenance / supplemental food purchasing / Order of the Alhambra



Fr. Paschal Petcavage, OSB

Professed 1998 / Ordained 1981

Parochial vicar / Holy Family Parish, Poland, Ohio (Diocese of Youngstown)



Bro. Mario Parisi, OSB

Professed 2000

Recon Residence for Priests and Religious / Missouri



Fr. Finbar Ramsak, OSB

Professed 2006 / Ordained 2011

BHS Theology teacher / BHS Board of Trustees / Mass assistance for the Poor Clare Colettine nuns / Weekend assistance at Assumption Parish, Broadview Heights / Abbey Liturgical MC



Fr. Louis Carey, OSB
Professed 2008 / Ordained 2018

Parochial Vicar / Assumption Parish, Broadview Heights



Fr. Thomas Sanders, OSB
Professed 2010 / Ordained 2016

BHS Science Faculty / Abbey Vocation Director / Abbey organist / Weekend assistance at St. Anthony's Parish, Lorain and St. Teresa's Parish, Sheffield / Benedictine Order of Cleveland Office of Mission Integration



Fr. Conrad Wald, OSB
Professed 2013 / Ordained 2019

Abbey Procurator / Abbey Senior Council / Education studies at John Carroll University / Weekend assistance at Immaculate Conception Parish, Madison



Bro. Simon Corrigan, OSB
Professed 2019

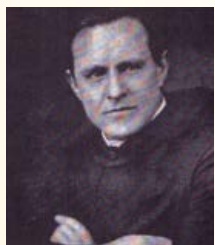
Director of Abbey Food Services / Abbey Sacristan / Abbey maintenance / Hospitality Management Studies / Cuyahoga Community College



Bro. Gregory Coyne, OSB
Oblation 2022

Assistant to the Director of Vocations / Abbey maintenance / College studies at Lakeland Community College

IN MEMORIAM



Fr. Gregory Vaniscak, OSB

January 15, 1938
53 years old



Fr. Paschal Kavulic, OSB

July 17, 1940
41 years old



Fr. Emeric Kovach, OSB

March 6, 1954
35 years old



Fr. Fabian Rolince, OSB

July 6, 1955
36 years old



Fr. Celestine Drexler, OSB

February 10, 1960
66 years old



Fr. George Luba, OSB

July 25, 1961
64 years old



Fr. Leo Rehak, OSB

September 8, 1961
67 years old



Fr. Francis Durkac, OSB

September 15, 1961
49 years old



Bro. Nicholas Pekar, OSB

November 16, 1962
78 years old



Fr. Method Granchie, OSB

November 27, 1963
49 years old



Fr. Aloysius Jenco, OSB

February 9, 1964
51 years old



Fr. Charles Florek, OSB

December 27, 1964
68 years old



Fr. Peter Petrasek, OSB

January 21, 1967
79 years old



Fr. Benedict Dobrancin, OSB

December 1, 1967
55 years old



Fr. Daniel Novak, OSB

May 15, 1968
58 years old



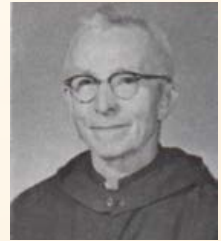
Fr. Florian Hudac, OSB

August 26, 1969
53 years old



Fr. Michael Jasko, OSB

June 7, 1973
68 years old



Bro. Method Tokarcik, OSB

November 29, 1973
86 years old



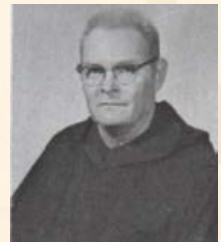
Fr. Paul Taracko, OSB

September 13, 1974
65 years old



Fr. Ivan Kramoris, OSB

November 1, 1974
72 years old



Bro. Benedict Klucas, OSB

December 3, 1974
59 years old



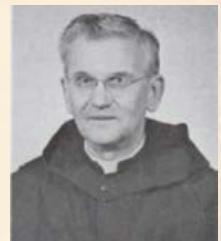
Fr. Damian Balaga, OSB

October 3, 1976
57 years old



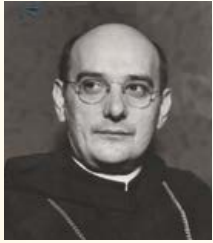
Fr. Donald Baydik, OSB

November 4, 1976
54 years old



Fr. Sylvester Prisc, OSB

July 19, 1977
72 years old



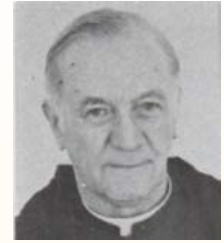
Abbot Stanislaus Gmuca, OSB

July 21, 1977
82 years old



Bro. Florian Halcin, OSB

September 15, 1980
92 years old



Fr. Cyril Novotny, OSB

December 21, 1981
68 years old



Fr. Edward Yatsko, OSB

January 13, 1983
74 years old



Bro. Martin Seckar, OSB

February 13, 1983
91 years old



Fr. Stephen Sramek, OSB

January 27, 1984
72 years old



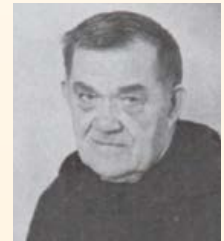
Abbot Theodore Kojis, OSB

September 29, 1984
75 years old



Bro. Anthony Fertelmes, OSB

November 23, 1984
77 years old



Bro. Victor Repon, OSB

May 15, 1986
89 years old



Bro. Alec Lazur, OSB

September 5, 1987
53 years old



Fr. Augustine Yurko, OSB

May 23, 1990
77 years old



Fr. Maurus Maruskin, OSB

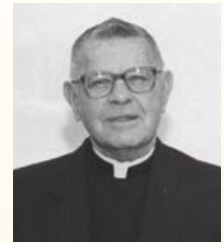
January 26, 1991
77 years old



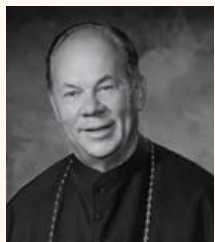
Fr. James Forgac, OSB
February 18, 1991
71 years old



Fr. Marian Sabo, OSB
November 13, 1991
65 years old



Fr. Louis Hudak, OSB
June 22, 1992
76 years old



Abbot Jerome Koval, OSB
September 18, 1993
76 years old



Fr. Basil Hrin, OSB
October 31, 1993
69 years old



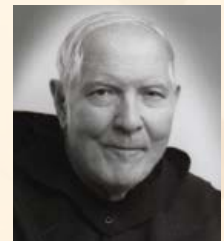
Bro. Bartholomew Lucac, OSB
November 3, 1993
30 years old
Buried in Slovakia



Fr. Thomas Podobnik, OSB
November 18, 1993
80 years old



Fr. David Vizsolyi, OSB
May 25, 1994
69 years old



Fr. John Zeman, OSB
November 1, 1994
89 years old



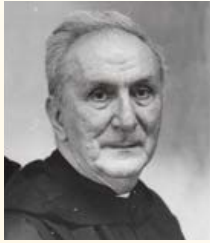
Bro. Ambrose Matulak, OSB
September 3, 1995
65 years old



Fr. Martin Vanecko, OSB
November 6, 1995
86 years old



Fr. Joseph Karaba, OSB
February 25, 1996
83 years old



Fr. Mark Pitoniak, OSB

May 13, 1996
83 years old



Fr. Matthew Bonk, OSB

November 9, 1996
82 years old



Fr. Gregory Oravec, OSB

May 30, 1998
80 years old



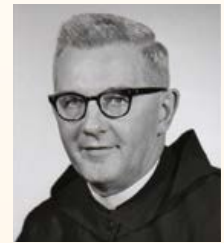
Bro. Paul Marconyak, OSB

March 14, 1999
87 years old



Fr. Robert Wilkes, OSB

May 13, 1999
78 years old



Fr. Bernard Slimak, OSB

November 5, 1999
86 years old



Fr. Raphael Zbin, OSB

February 2, 2001
80 years old



Fr. Armand Gress, OSB

November 1, 2001
90 years old



Bro. Alfred Nasticky, OSB

August 30, 2002
82 years old



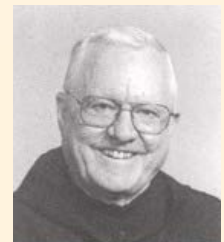
Fr. Andrew Pier, OSB

March 18, 2003
93 years old



Bro. Donald LaPlante, OSB

June 22, 2005
66 years old



Fr. Benedict Sellers, OSB

April 2, 2007
85 years old



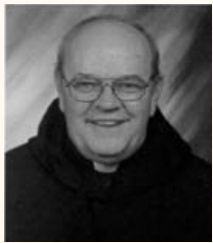
Fr. William Matyas, OSB
September 30, 2008
80 years old



Fr. Lawrence Sevcik, OSB
December 1, 2008
83 years old



Fr. Ronald Mahnke, OSB
August 31, 2009
74 years old



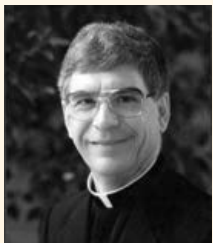
Fr. Albert Marflak, OSB
May 26, 2012
65 years old



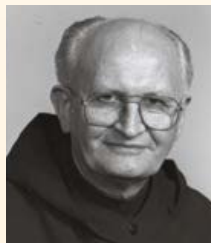
Bro. Theodore Girard, OSB
May 19, 2013
65 years old



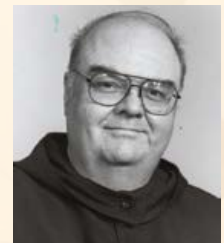
Bro. Patrick Ryan, OSB
January 12, 2015
82 years old



Fr. Anthony (Norbert) Ozimek, OSB
August 26, 2015
74 years old



Bro. Joseph Venonsky, OSB
April 13, 2016
91 years old



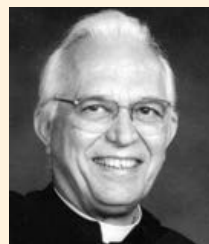
Bro. Richard Richmond, OSB
November 1, 2017
70 years old



Fr. Placid Pientek, OSB
May 6, 2018
99 years old



Fr. Timothy Buyansky, OSB
February 25, 2021
78 years old



Abbot Clement Zeleznik, OSB
May 3, 2021
89 years old



Fr. Dominic Mondzelewski, OSB
June 13, 2021
79 years old

MONKS WHO PROFESSED FIRST VOWS FOR SAINT ANDREW ABBEY

1930 – Present

(Religious Name) Clerics and Bros.

Daniel Novak – 1930 (died 1968)

Theodore Kojis – 1930 (died 1984)

Joseph Buc – 1931 (left 1933)

Stephan Sramek – 1931 (died 1984)

Andrew Pier – 1931 (died 2003)

Victor Repon – 1931 (died 1986)

Paul Taracko – 1932 (died 1974)

Benedict Dobrancin – 1933 (died 1967)

Anthony Bahleda – 1933 (left 1938)

Joseph Koval – 1933 (left 1937)

Placid Kozak – 1934 (left 1936)

Bernard Slimak – 1934 (died 1999)

Vincent Chech – 1934 (left 1936)

Robert Krak – 1934 (left 1936)

Aloysius Jenco – 1934 (died 1964)

Cyril Novotny – 1934 (died 1981)

Joseph Karaba – 1934 (died 1996)

Clement Firko – 1934 (left 1949)

Anthony Fertelmes – 1934 (died 1984)

Mark Pitoniak – 1935 (died 1996)

Peter Petrasek – 1935 (died 1967)

John Slivka – 1935 (left 1943)

Dominic Haky – 1935 (left 1940)

Edward Yatsko – 1936 (died 1983)

Thomas Podobnik – 1936 (died 1993)

Louis Hudak – 1936 (died 1992)

Matthew Bonk – 1936 (died 1996)

Method Granchie – 1936 (died 1963)

Victor Kodrik – 1936 (left 1940)

Augustine Yurko – 1936 (died 1990)

Martin Vanecko – 1936 (died 1995)

Dominic Chonko – 1937 (left 1953)

Florian Hudac – 1937 (died 1969)

Philip Kaducak – 1937 (left 1963)

Maurus Maruskin – 1937 (died 1991)

Jerome Koval – 1938 (died 1993)

Aloysius Stefko – 1938 (left 1965)

Placid Pientek – 1939 (died 2018)

Gregory Oravec – 1939 (died 1998)

James Forgac – 1939 (died 1991)

Francis Durkac – 1939 (died 1961)

Francis Cvinar – 1939 (left 1942)

Gabriel Yurko – 1941 (left 1946)

Anselm Pillar – 1942 (transferred 1946)

Raphael Zbin – 1942 (died 2001)

Cyprian Tkacik – 1942 (transferred 1946)

Robert Wilkes – 1942 (died 1999)

Andrew Haky – 1942 (left 1943)

Benedict Klucas – 1942 (died 1974)

Emeric Kovac – 1943 (died 1954)

Donald Baydik – 1943 (died 1976)

Fabian Rolince – 1944 (died 1955)

Damian Baloga – 1944 (died 1976)

Basil Hrin – 1944 (died 1993)

Luke Yaeger – 1944 (left 1971)
 Bartholomew Bacho – 1944 (left 1949)
 Justin Wojtek – 1945 (transferred 1948)
David Vizsolyi – 1945 (died 1994)
 Cosmas Starcovic – 1946 (left 1948)
 Hilary Kookan – 1946 (left 1948)
Lawrence Sevcik – 1946 (died 2008)
William Matyas – 1947 (died 2008)
 Vincent Bina – 1947 (left 1950)
 Eugene Liptak – 1948 (left 1953)
Joseph Venonsky – 1948 (died 2016)
 Anthony Marko – 1949 (left 1976)
 Placid Smola – 1949 (left 1952)
 Thomas Kiel – 1949 (left 1964)
 Raymond Yanosko – 1950 (left 1955)
 Albert Mihalko – 1951 (left 1955)
Marian Sabo – 1952 (died 1991)
 Walter Eckert – 1952 (left 1977)
 Cosmas Springborn – 1952 (left 1955)
Patrick Ryan – 1952 (died 2015)
Clement Zeleznik – 1953 (died 2021)
Alfred Nasticky – 1953 (died 2002)
Ambrose Matulak – 1953 (died 1995)
 Richard Hudak – 1954 (left 1971)
 Gerald Soltis – 1955 (left 1957)
 Denis Sheets – 1955 (left 1978)
 Leonard Ceklosky – 1955 (1957)
Ronald Mahnke – 1956 (died 2009)
 Bede Pace – 1956 (left 1964)
 Bruno Kaschalk – 1956 (left 1957)
 Jude Katronick – 1956 (left 1963)
Roger Gries – 1957 to present
 Paschal Rezac – 1957 (left 1960)
 Timothy Martin – 1957 (left 1961)
 Casimir Lechowicz – 1957 (left 1968)
 Blasé Forgach – 1957 (left 1961)

Vincent Velas – 1958 (left 1976)
 Gerard Lambert – 1959 (left 1962)
 Brendan Brown – 1959 (left 1960)
 Boniface Verespej – 1959 (left 1962)
 Raymond Dombroski – 1959 (left 1961)
Anselm Zupka – 1961 to present
 Bonaventure Wohl – 1962 (left 1965)
Norbert Ozimek – 1962 (died 2015)
 Conrad Noga – 1962 (left 1964)
Joachim Pastirik – 1963 to present
Timothy Buyansky – 1963 (died 2021)
Dominic Mondzelewski – 1963 (died 2021)
 Sebastian Janzso – 1963 (left 1965)
 Christopher Laketek – 1965 (left 1967)
 Jude Slovenski – 1967 (left 1974)
 (Returned as Jude Lesly – 1979 (left 1997))
Dismas Boeff – 1967 to present
Theodore Girard – 1968 (died 2013)
 Christopher Szylakowski – 1969 (left 1970)
Albert Marflak – 1970 (died 2012)
 Daniel Lizotte – 1970 (left 1972)
 Gerard Demko – 1970 (left 1972)
 Job Brisky – 1971 (left 1973)
Benedict Sellers – 1971 (died 2007)
 Peter Cataldo – 1972 (left 1974)
 Glenn Stalder – 1972 (left 1973)
Christopher Schwartz – 1973 to present
 Francis Fergus – 1973 (left 2003)
Gerard Gonda – 1974 to present
 Charles Hawkins – 1974 (left 1989)
Philip Petrow – 1974 to present
 Columban de Graft-Biney – 1976 (left 1979)
 Ignatius Arrigo – 1977 (left 1979)
Gary Hoover – 1977 to present
 Leonard Hola – 1977 (left 1989)
 Michael Severance – 1978 (left 1981)

Paul Marconyak – 1978 (died 1999)

Richard Richmond – 1978 (died 2018)

Luke Majernik – 1978 (left 1981)

Peter Ancell – 1978 to present

Justin Sites – 1978 (left 1981)

Kenneth Katricak -1979 to present

Aaron Ambrose – 1980 (left 1984)

Gabriel Balazovic -1981 to present

Bede Kotlinski – 1982 to present

Alec Lazur – 1983 (died 1987)

Daniel Zeman -1983 (left 1986)

Michael Brunovsky -1985 to present

Ignatius Isaac –1985 (left 2004)

Diego Stanton – 1988 (left 1995)

Aelred Damukaitis – 1992 (left 1994)

Justin Dyrwal – 1992 to present

Bernard Banks – 1992 (left 1997)

Nicholas Spisak – 1993 to present

Jacob Casey – 1995 (left 1998)

John Mellody – 1997 (left 2000)

Donald LaPlante – obl. 1997 (died 2005)

Paschal Petcavage – 1998 to present

Mario Parisi – 2000 to present

Marcel Longe – 2001 (left 2004)

John Rusin – 2003 (left 2004)

Victor Machado – 2003 (left 2005)

Finbar Ramsak – 2006 to present

Louis Carey – 2008 to present

Raphael O’Hearn – 2009 (left 2011)

Thomas Sanders – 2010 to present

Paul Culver – 2012 (left 2015)

Conrad Wald – 2013 to present

Simon Corrigan – 2019 to present

Gregory Coyne – 2022 to present

MONKS WHO TRANSFERRED INTO ST.ANDREW:

(From St. Procopius -our founding abbey)

Gregory Vaniscak (died 1938)

Stanislaus Gmuca (died 1977)

Ivan Kramoris (died 1974)

Celestine Drexler (died 1960)

Leo Rehak (died 1961)

Charles Florek (died 1964)

George Luba (died 1961)

Nicholas Pekar (died 1962)

Martin Seckar (died 1983)

Method Tokarcik (died 1973)

Florian Halcin (died 1980)

Sylvester Prisc (died 1977)

Gilbert Stopko (left 1953)

Michael Jasko (died 1973)

Wendelin Kravec (left 1953)

(From St. Vincent Archabbey):

Paschal Kavulic (died 1940)

Armand Gress (died 2001)

(From St. Peter’s Abbey):

John Zeman (died 1994)

(From Glastonbury Abbey):

Jeffrey Krizner (left 1974)

(From St. Leo’s Abbey):

Jonathan Zingales (left 1994)

HISTORICAL PERSONNEL STATISTICS OF SAINT ANDREW ABBEY

1922 – 2022

179

Total number of monks
in vows who have lived
and worked as monks of
this abbey

TOTAL NUMBER OF
DEATHS **73** MONKS

159

Total number of men
who professed their first
vows as monks for Saint
Andrew Abbey

20

Total number of monks who
transferred into our abbey from
other abbeys (15 were from St.
Procopius Abbey which
founded Saint Andrew Abbey)

Professions by Decade

1930's	42 professed first vows	66% persevered
1940's	26 professed first vows	46% persevered
1950's	27 professed first vows	25% persevered
1960's	13 professed first vows	53% persevered
1970's	23 professed first vows	43% persevered
1980's	8 professed first vows	37% persevered
1990's	8 professed first vows	50% persevered
2000's	7 professed first vows	42% persevered
2010's and 2020's	5 professed first vows thusfar	80% persevered

Our abbey went against national trends by almost doubling professions of new monks in the 1970s over the 1960s.

Relatives of living and deceased abbey monks who were in ordained or consecrated life:

Abbot Stanislaus Gmuca, OSB (dec):

Sister Mary Edward, OSF (Sister)

Sister Mary Monica, OSF (Sister)

Fr. Celestine Drexler, OSB (dec):

Sister Mary Thomasine, OSF (Sister)

Abbot Jerome Koval, OSB (dec):

Sister Mary Anacleta Koval, SS.CM. (Sister)

Sister Mary Floranne Yatsko, SND (Cousin)

Fr. Michael Jasko, OSB (Cousin)

Sister Mary Bernard Begany, SIW (Cousin)

Fr. Michael Jasko, OSB (dec):

Sister Mary Floranne Yatsko, SND (Niece)

Abbot Jerome Koval, OSB (Cousin)

Sister Mary Anacleta Koval, SS.CM (Cousin)

Sister Mary Bernard Begany, SIW (Cousin)

Abbot Clement Zeleznik, OSB (dec):

Sister Mary Jonathan Zeleznik, SND (Sister)

Sister Regina Marie Zeleznik, SND (Sister)

Sister Marie Ellen Kuhel, OSU (Cousin)

Abbot Roger Gries, OSB:

Sister Miriam Therese, OSU (Aunt)

Fr. Dominic Mondzelewski, OSB (dec):

Msgr. Edmund Mondzelewski (Uncle)

Bishop David Walkowiak (Cousin)

Fr. Damian Baloga, OSB (dec):

Sister Mary Damian Baloga, OSF (Sister)

Fr. Bernard Slimak, OSB (dec):

Sister Mary James, VSC (Sister)

Sister Mary Martina, VSC (Sister)

Fr. James Forgac, OSB (dec):

Sister Margaret Mary, VSC (Sister)

Fr. Augustine Yurko, OSB (dec):

Fr. William Yurko (Brother)

Sister Mary William, OSU (Sister)

Fr. Andrew Pier, OSB (dec):

Msgr. Joseph Pier (Brother)

Fr. Matthew Bonk, OSB (dec):

Fr. Boniface Bonk, T.O.R. (Brother)

Fr. Dismas Boeff, OSB:

Msgr. Anthony Boeff (Great Uncle)

Fr. Norbert Ozimek, OSB (dec):

Fr. Joseph Ozimek (Uncle)

Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB:

Fr. Steven Brunovsky (Brother)

Sister Joanne Marusa, OSF (Aunt)

Fr. Henry Marusa, SVD (Great Uncle)

Sister Pauline Posedly, DM (Great Aunt)

Bro. Nicholas Spisak, OSB:

Fr. Stephen Spisak (Brother)

Fr. Paschal Petcavage, OSB:

Bro. George Petcavage, OFM (Uncle)

Sister Margaret Petcavage, SSC (Aunt)

Fr. Leo DeChant, CSJ (Cousin)

Sister St. Leo DeChant, SND (Cousin)

Sister Jeanmarie DeChant, SND (Cousin)

Bro. Paul Marconyak, OSB (dec):

Fr. Albert Marconyak (Brother)

Sister Mariella Marck, SFCC (Sister)

Fr. Maurus Maruskin, OSB (dec):

Sister Miriam Fidelis Pinchot, OSU (Cousin)

Bro. Richard Richmond, OSB:

Sister Virginia Richmond, OSU (Aunt)

**Benedictine High School alumni currently serving as ordained clergy or religious
(not from St. Andrew Abbey):**

Msgr. T. Ansgar Laczko (Class of 1951):
Retired, Archdiocese of Washington, DC

Fr. Vincent Velas (Class of 1955):
Diocese of Pittsburgh (Retired)

Fr. Johnnie Smith (Class of 1959):
Diocese of Memphis, Tennessee (Retired)

Fr. Nicholas Barille, S.T. (Class of 1961):
Missionary Servants of the Holy Trinity
Riverside, California

Brother Nathaniel Grossman, OSB (Class of 1966):
St. Bede's Abbey, Peru, Illinois

Fr. William Krizner (Class of 1967):
Pastor, St. Colette's Parish, Brunswick

Permanent Deacons (Known)

Rev. Mr. Joseph Shinske (Class of 1953) – Arizona

Rev. Mr. Richard Zoldak (Class of 1971) – Kentucky

Diocese of Cleveland:

Rev. Mr. Kenneth Golonka (Class of 1956)

Rev. Mr. Vincent Belsito (Class of 1960)

Rev. Mr. Robert Bubnick (Class of 1964)

Fr. Benet Phillips, OSB (Class of 1983):
St. Anselm's Abbey, Manchester, New Hampshire

Fr. Eric Orzech (Class of 1985):
Pastor, St. Stanislaus and St. Casimir's
Parishes, Cleveland

Fr. John Shea, SJ, Ph.D. (Class of 1993):
Professor, Creighton University

Fr. Adam Zajac (Class of 2004):
Pastor, St. Mark's and St. Mel's Parishes

Fr. Martin Dober (Class of 2010):
Parochial Vicar, St. John Vianney Parish, Mentor



Abbot Jerome poses at the banquet following his abbatial blessing on June 28, 1966 with relatives in religious life (l-r): Sister Mary Bernard Begany, SIW; Sister Antoinette Mihal, SS.CM; Mother Bernard Hudak, SS.CM; Abbot Jerome; Fr. Michael Jasko, OSB; Sister Anacleta Koval, SS.CM; and Sister Mary Floranne, SND.



Early pioneer monks in Cleveland gather with Abbot President Ernest Helmstetter, OSB (seated front left) after the election of Fr. Gregory Vaniscak, OSB (seated front right) as the Conventual Prior of the new St. Andrew's Independent Priory on October 3, 1929. The other founding monks present were (l-r): Fr. Celestine Drexler, OSB; Fr. Leo Rehak, OSB; Fr. John Zeman, OSB; Bro. Martin Seckar, OSB; Fr. Charles Florek, OSB; Fr. Gilbert Stopko, OSB; Bro. Method Tokarcik, OSB (top row); Fr. George Luba, OSB; Bro. Nicholas Pekar, OSB (top row); Fr. Sylvester Prisc, OSB; Fr. Ivan Kramoris, OSB; and Fr. Stanislaus Gmuca, OSB.



All rows left to right:

Top Row – Bro. Job Brisky, Fr. Andrew Pier, Fr. Donald Baydik, Fr. James Forgac, Fr. Walter Eckert, Fr. Dominic Mondzelewski.

Row Eight – Fr. Roger Gries, Fr. William Matyas, Fr. Norbert Ozimek, Bro. Joseph Venonsky, Bro. Bohdan Chmelicky, Bro. Bryan Chawszczewski.

Row Seven – Bro. Jeffrey Krizner, Bro. Glenn Stalder, Bro. Peter Cataldo, Fr. Stephen Sramek, Fr. Louis Hudak, Fr. Martin Vanecko, Fr. Raphael Zbin.

Row Six – Fr. Vincent Velas, Fr. Mark Pitoniak, Bro. Theodore Girard, Fr. Albert Marflak, Fr. Placid Pientek, Fr. Denis Sheets, Fr. Lawrence Sevcik.

Row Five – Fr. John Zeman, Fr. Christopher Schwartz, Fr. Jude Slovenski, Fr. Ronald Mahnke, Bro. Ambrose Matulak, Fr. Joachim Pastirik, Bro. Patrick Ryan.

Row Four – Bro. Benedict Klucas, Fr. Robert Wilkes, Fr. Basil Hrin, Fr. Edward Yatsko, Fr. Benedict Sellers, Fr. David Vizsolyi, Fr. Cyril Novotny.

Row Three – Bro. Anthony Fertelmes, Fr. Thomas Podobnik, Bro. Alfred Nasticky, Fr. Anthony Marko, Bro. Victor Repon, Bro. Florian Halcin.

Row Two – Fr. Dismas Boeff, Fr. Damian Baloga, Fr. Joseph Karaba, Fr. Bernard Slimak, Fr. Maurus Maruskin, Fr. Paul Taracko, Fr. Michael Jasko, Bro. Method Tokarcik.

Bottom Row – Bro. Martin Seckar, Fr. Sylvester Prisc, Prior Augustine Yurko, Abbot Jerome Koval, Subprior Anselm Zupka, Fr. Timothy Buyansky.

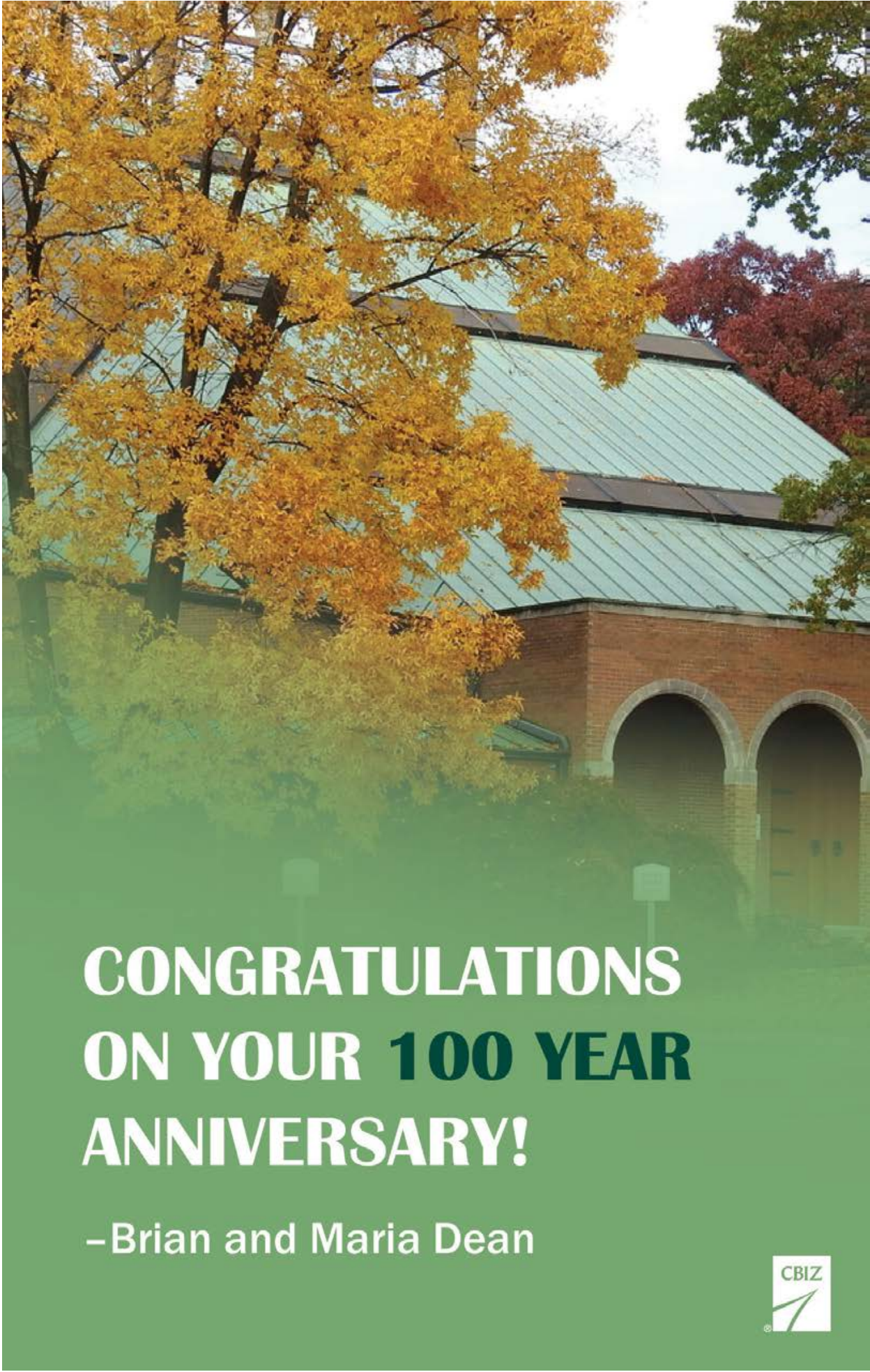
Missing: Abbot Stanislaus Gmuca, Abbot Theodore Kojis, Fr. Ivan Kramoris, Fr. Armand Gress, Fr. Matthew Bonk, Fr. Gregory Oravec, Fr. Marian Sabo, Fr. Clement Zeleznik, Bro. Daniel Lizotte, Bro. Gerard Demko.



***WE GIVE THANKS TO THE
LORD FOR YOUR 100
YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE
CLEVELAND COMMUNITY***

***MAY GOD
BLESS YOU ALWAYS***

***THE ZUPKA AND
BEDNARSKI FAMILIES***



CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR **100 YEAR** ANNIVERSARY!

– Brian and Maria Dean



Congratulations

on this remarkable milestone
for the

Benedictine Order of Cleveland

From the Members of
FCSLA Life Sr. 481 Jr. 374

100 YEARS
1922-2022

We join the
Benedictine Monks
of Saint Andrew Abbey

in celebrating

100 YEARS



Very Rev. Monsignor Peter M. Polando
National Chaplain

Cynthia M. Maleski
National President/CEO

Jeanette E. Palanca
National Director

Joann Skvarek Banvich
National Director

Lawrence M. Golofski
National Director

Patrick F. Braun
National Director

Suzanne V. Strohl
National Trustee

Sue Ann M. Seich
National Trustee

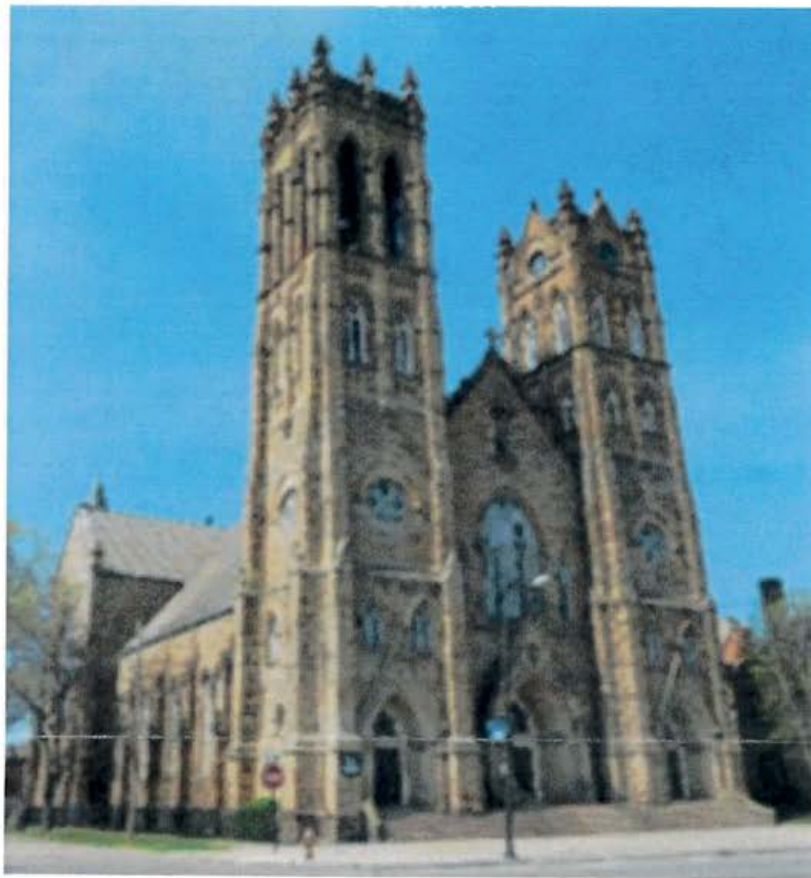
Dorothy L. Urbanowicz
National Auditor

Barbara A. Sekerak
National Auditor

Dennis L. Povondra
National Auditor

First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association of the United States of America
a fraternal benefit society domiciled in Beachwood, OH
24950 Chagrin Blvd. | Beachwood, Ohio 44122
800.464.4642 | www.fcsla.com

CENTENNIAL CONGRATULATIONS!



**GOD BLESS THE MONKS OF
SAINT ANDREW ABBEY
AS YOU OBSERVE
100 YEARS OF MINISTRY**

**IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
PARISHIONERS AND STAFF
4129 Superior Avenue • Cleveland, OH 44103**

**For the 100th Anniversary of St. Andrew Abbey,
we gladly support all of the men and women who shaped our
Benedictine family, education, and tradition.**

In honor of:

My grandparents

Marian and Martin Brinza '42

my parents

Robert and Monica Brinza Williams

In dedication to:

Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB

Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB

Fr. Anselm Zupka, OSB

Fr. Gerard (Martin) Gonda, OSB

In memory of:

Fr. Albert Marflak, OSB

Fr. Dominic Mondzelewski, OSB

Br. Patrick Ryan, OSB

Abbot Clement Zeleznik, OSB

**On behalf of Martin, Celeste, Jude, and Ava Williams
Via Con Dios from San Antonio**

Martin Williams

Mr. Benedictine 1996

&

Daniel Williams

Mr. Benedictine 2008

100 YEARS

**We are proud to be part
of the celebration
marking 100 years that
St. Andrew Abbey
and the monks have
faithfully served God
and the community.**

*Congratulations from
The O'Neill Family*

Congratulations On Your 100 From Our 20.



Proud of our graduate,
Seamus Coyne, now
Brother Gregory Coyne.



Celebrating 20 Years

pioacademy.org

*Best wishes for a successful
St. Andrew Abbey Centennial Celebration
from the*

Officers and Members of the SLOVAK CATHOLIC SOKOL

America's Greatest Slovak Gymnastic
and Athletic Fraternity

1905



2022

- ☆ Life Insurance
- ☆ Annuities
- ☆ Fellowship
- ☆ Gymnastics
- ☆ Athletics
- ☆ Scholarship Grants

Michael J. Horvath
Supreme President

Scott T. Pogorelec, F.I.C.
Supreme Secretary

Home Office

SLOVAK CATHOLIC SOKOL
205 Madison Street
Passaic, N.J. 07055
800-886-7656

Web site: www.scslife.org
E-mail: Sokol205@aol.com

For all your life insurance needs

This year we celebrate 117 years of dedicated
fraternal service to our members and
to the Slovak-American community

Remember our Slogan "A Sound Mind in a Sound Body"



**Happy 100 Year Anniversary
St. Andrew's Abbey!**

**God Bless our Benedictine
Abbots, Priests and Brothers!**



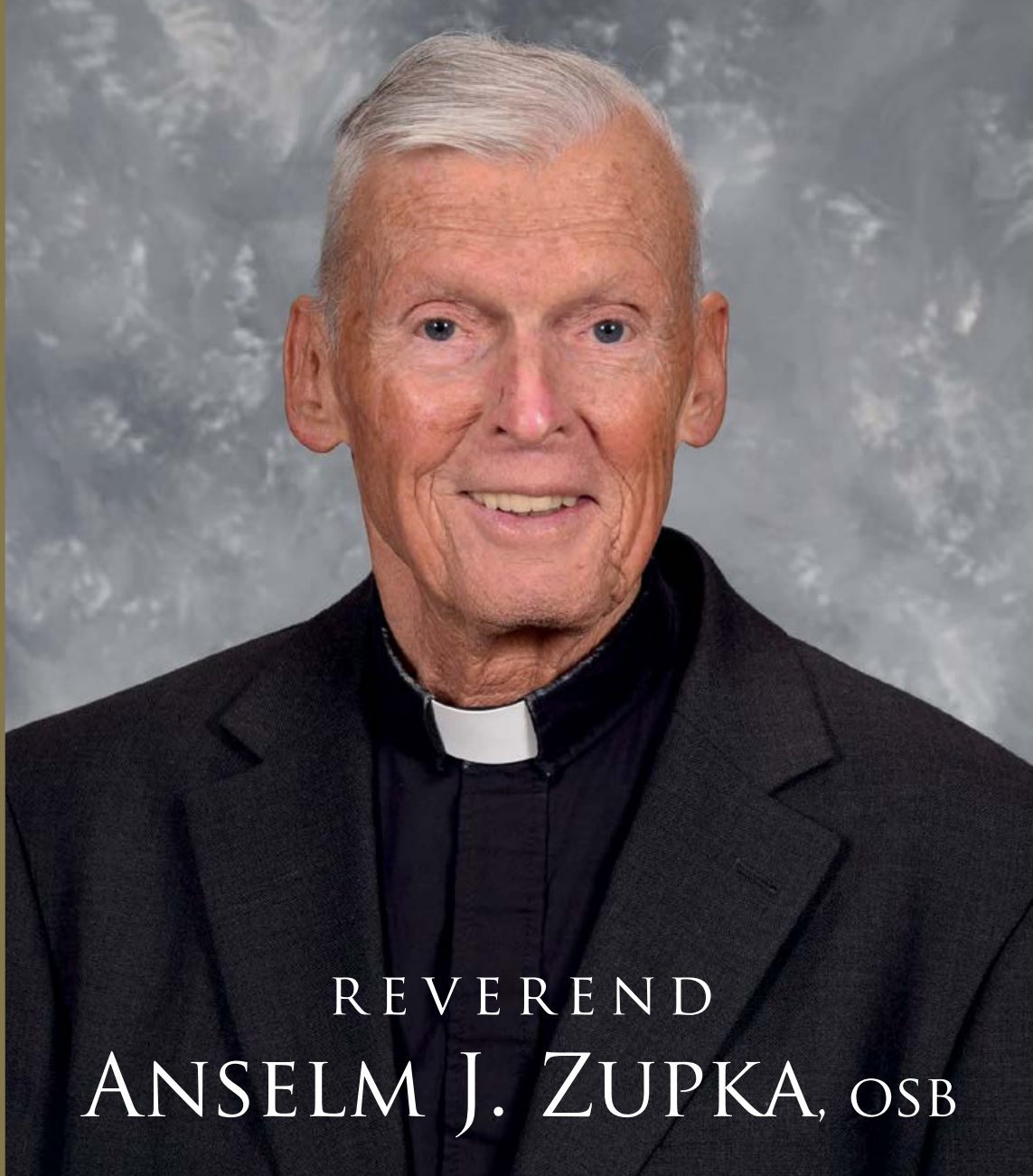
**Congratulations From Your Friends & Family
at St. Adalbert Church**

ST. ADALBERT

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

BEREA, OHIO • ESTABLISHED 1873

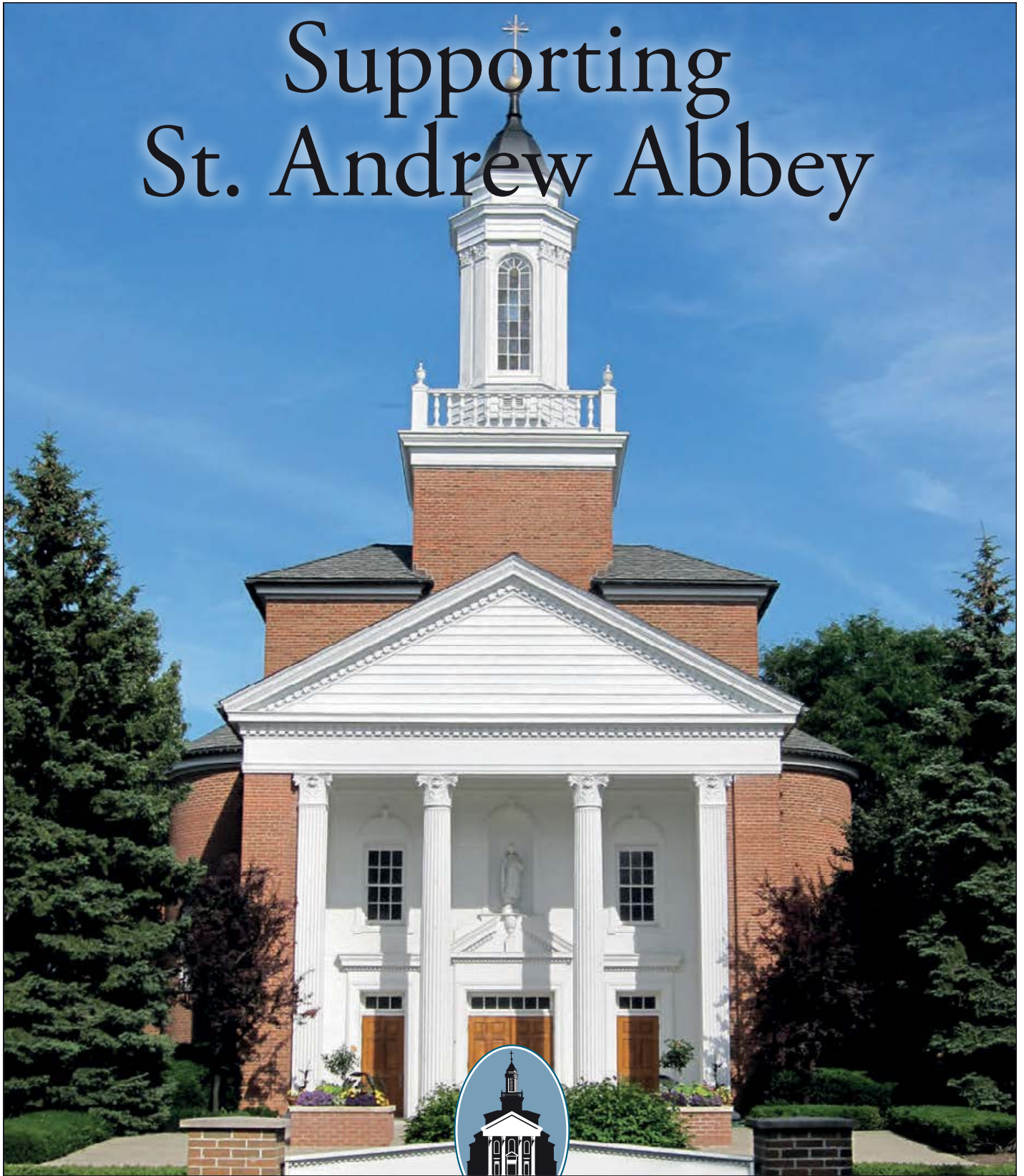
THANK YOU FOR YOUR 55 YEARS
OF FAITHFUL SERVICE TO
ST. CHARLES BORRROMEO PARISH



REVEREND
ANSELM J. ZUPKA, OSB

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
BENEDICTINE ORDER OF CLEVELAND
ON YOUR CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY
ORA ET LABORA

Supporting St. Andrew Abbey



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A EUCHARISTIC FAMILY LIVING THE MISSION OF CHRIST

3450 Norwood Road, Shaker Heights, Ohio 44122 • 216.991.1444
Reverend Thomas G. Fanta, Pastor • www.stdominicchurch.net



From the St. John Family

It's been a long time, 100 years, and our family has been there all along. Yes, when the Slovak Benedictine Monks came over to Buckeye Road in Cleveland, the Slovak Stupjansky Family, now the St. John Family, was there to support them. Andrew Stupjansky, a Slovak immigrant, came to the United States in 1893 and settled in Cleveland. He founded the Stupjansky Funeral Home in 1913 on lower Buckeye Road (name legally changed to St. John in 1950 when I began at Benedictine High School). Andrew being active in Slovak lodges and at St. Wendelin and St. Ladislaus Parishes, joined others in support of the Slovak Benedictines who came in 1922. Soon he was joined by his son John E. Stupjansky -St. John and the funeral business expanded to Bedford and Bainbridge Township. From there until now, the St. John Family, all 5 generations, will continue with sincere pleasure to support the Benedictine Order of Cleveland. It is with joyful admiration and pride for the Benedictine Order of Cleveland that our family offers sincere congratulations.

***Chuck St. John '54
and Family***

ORA ET Labora

HAPPY 100TH ANNIVERSARY

to the monks of St. Andrew Abbey!

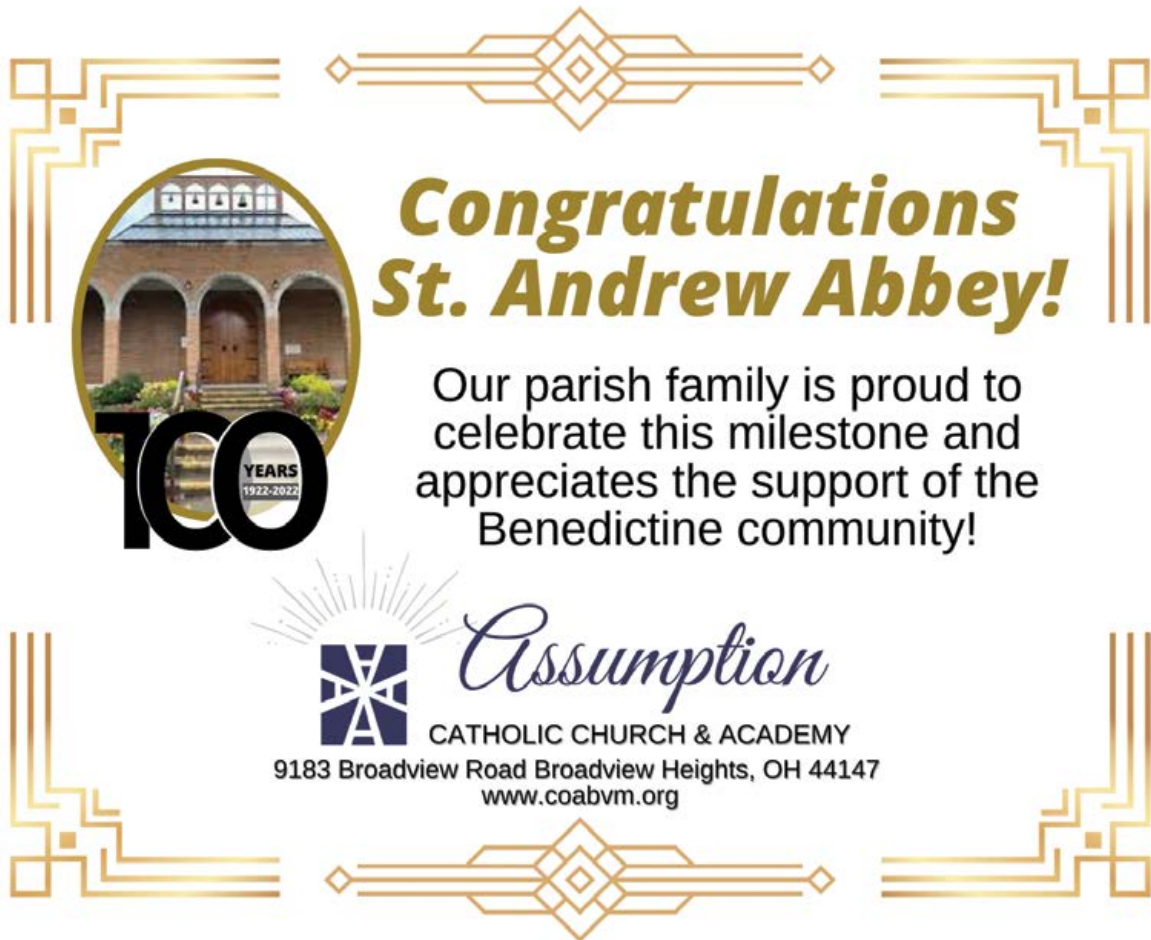
Your prayer, work, and witness have
been a great blessing to the Church
and the world.

May God continue to bless you and
use you as His instruments for the
gospel.

From the monks of St. Procopius Abbey



ST. PROCOPIUS ABBEY
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*Blessings to St. Andrew Abbey as they
continue to serve the community in
Cleveland, Ohio.*

**FCSLA Life Sr. Br. 141
&
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Joining you in thanking God
for 100 years of prayer and work!



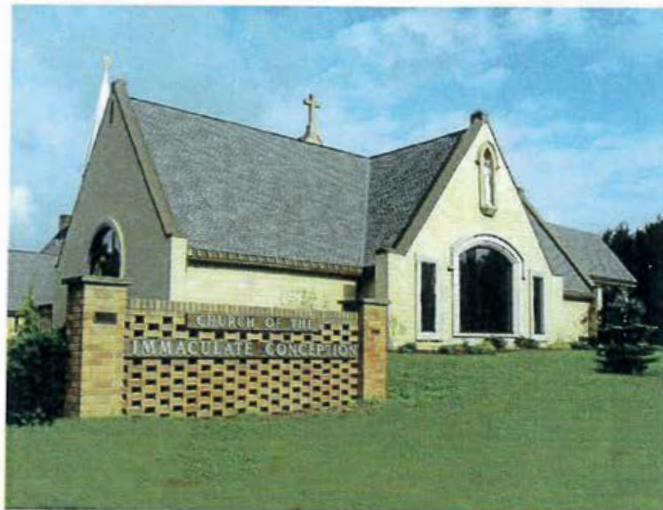
Holy Spirit Church

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**Immaculate Conception Parish in Madison,
Ohio thanks the Benedictine Monks for 100
years of service to our diocese and for the
weekend ministry of Fr. Conrad Wald, OSB**

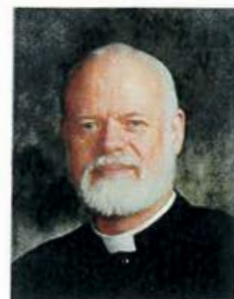


Masses: Saturday – 4:00 PM (Vigil Mass)

Sunday – 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, Noon

Weekdays: 8:30 AM Monday and Wednesday

7:00 PM Tuesday and Thursday



Fr. Sean Donnelly, Pastor



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Congratulations on your 100th Anniversary! Multos Annos!
Thank you Benedictines for all you do for us!

*Don't forget to join us for our "A Green Knight to Remember" – Friday, November 11, 2022, 6:30 PM
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for 100 years of prayer and work!



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Sketch of St. Anne — Leonardo da Vinci c. 1512

First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association

Okres Anna Hurban

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Congratulations

to the

Benedictine Order of Cleveland

on your momentous Centennial

From the Members of
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100 YEARS
1922-2022

**May God Bless You
&
Mary Keep You
As You Continue to Bring Souls to Christ
Ora et Labora
Bob & Jean Chase**



**Saint Ambrose Parish offers our prayers
& congratulations to The Benedictine Community
on your 100th Anniversary!**

God bless Abbot Gary Hoover, osb who so faithfully
has served our community for over 25 years.

Ad Multos Annos!

Jesus Christ is Everything for Us!

929 Pearl Road, Brunswick, Ohio ✦ 330.460.7300 ✦ www.StAmbrose.us

The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist



The Blessing of Abbot Stanislaus in St. John's Cathedral, October 2, 1934

Congratulates the Benedictine Monks

of Saint Andrew Abbey

on their Centennial Jubilee

Bishop Edward C. Malesic

Diocese of Cleveland

Reverend Sean Ralph, Rector

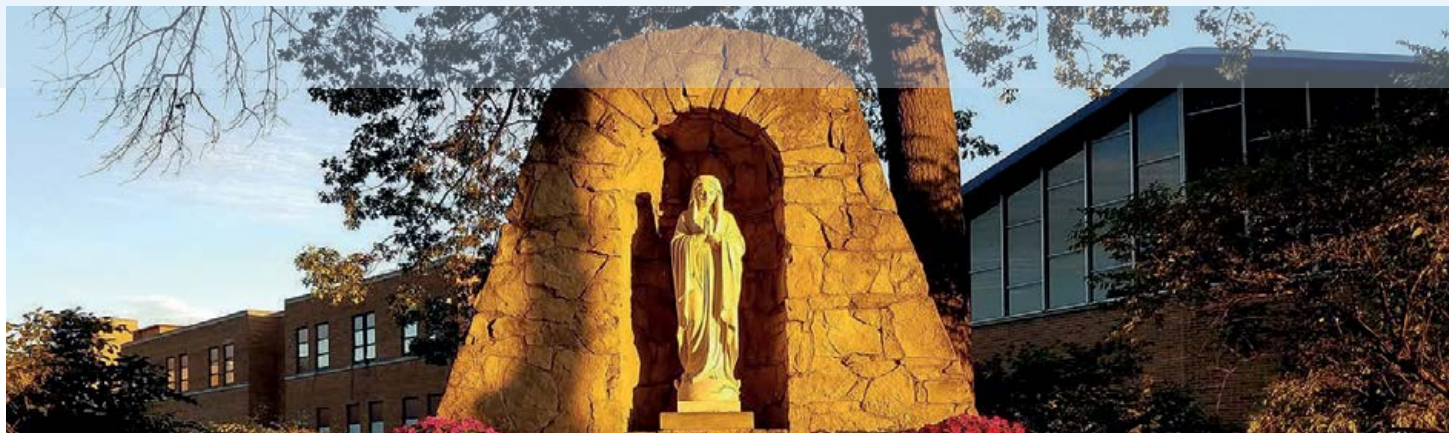


*The First Catholic Slovak Union
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A CLOSING WORD OF THANKS

Working on various aspects of this Centennial year has been a blessing for me, especially doing the research for this commemorative booklet. My entire life has been involved with the Benedictine monks of Saint Andrew Abbey from the day I was baptized by **Fr. Michael Jasko, OSB** in 1953 at St. Benedict's Church, through the last 49 years that I have lived in community as a vowed Benedictine monk and priest. Through this monastic vocation, I have had more wonderful experiences than I can list. Truly, God will never be outdone in generosity. As so my first thanks goes to Almighty God who called me to the "School of the Lord's Service" and I pray that more young men, especially graduates of Benedictine High School, may have the generosity and courage to follow this call now and in the future.

I am thankful to **Abbot Gary** and my confreres in the abbey for supporting the various special activities of this Centennial Year. In a special way, I want to thank **Abbot Austin Murphy, OSB** and **Fr. James Flint, OSB** of **St. Procopius Abbey** for sharing their historical records with us, but also for sharing their monastery with us for our historic joint retreat this past June. Thanks to **Bishop Edward Malesic** for celebrating our Centennial Mass and to **Bishop Roger Gries, OSB** for preaching.

I want to acknowledge the work done by **Chris Lorber**, Vice-President for Advancement for Saint Andrew Abbey and Benedictine High School, who kept the planning for this culminating Centennial Mass and Gala Banquet organized and moving amid many other projects. **Ashley Arko**, **Anthony DiGeronimo '08**, **Nicole Kobylinski**, and **Nick Formica** of our Advancement Office all helped tremendously. In a special way, I offer appreciation to **Brian Devers** for his time and talent in producing a very memorable video and for facilitating

the exchange of material with AGC for the production of this commemorative booklet and for the Mass booklet which **Fr. Michael** planned. **Courtney Dolinar** of AGC has been very patient and helpful in getting these projects completed in a professional way.

Next, I want to extend my appreciation to our **Abbey Centennial Committee** members: **Abbot Gary**, **Chris Lorber**, **Fr. Michael**, **Fr. Bede**, **Fr. Conrad**, **Barb Sekerak**, **Joyce Lechman**, **John '63** and **Jeannie Sabol**, **Donna Oros**, **Lenny Toth '70**, **Bill '88** and **Jayme Misconish**, **Jerry** and **Melissa Joyce**, **Ashley Arko**, **Nicole Kobylinski**, **Anthony DiGeronimo '08**, and **Nick Formica**. All helped in very important ways. We are also grateful for **Lenny's** generous gift of a new statue of **St. Benedict** for this Centennial.

I must also thank **Mary Ann DeFranco** of the Abbot's Office for her help with working with out-of-town guests. I appreciate the generosity of **Fr. Justin** and his staff and choir at Assumption Parish and the cooperation of **Anita Vecchio** and the staff of the Embassy Suites. Thanks goes to **Eddie and Sue Wrobel** of Orban's Flowers for the beautiful flowers in church and at the banquet. Along with St. John Funeral Home they have been faithful supporters of the Benedictines for ten decades. I thank **Bernie Wiederwohl '75** for sponsoring the band. Our appreciation includes **Mr. Ryan Ryzner '95**, president of Benedictine High School and principal **Mr. Dominic Fanelli** for providing student ushers today. We are thankful for having the **Home of Champions** as our major apostolate as it begins its **95th year**. And thanks to our sponsors, guests, and the parishes in which we partner and to all who came and supported this grand celebration so that in "All Things God May Be Glorified."

Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71



The late Marie Golias (fourth from left) with her father, sister, and brothers.

The Abbey Centennial Committee wants to offer our thanks to Marie Golias who was a valuable member of the Abbey Benefit and BHS Blue and White Gala Committees for many years. We really miss her energy and joy. The Lord called her from this life on this past Good Friday so that she could experience the new life of Easter. We believe she is celebrating this Centennial with us in a special way in union with the living and deceased monks who were so close to her family.



St. Andrew Abbey

10510 Buckeye Road

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