

# *Saint Andrew Abbey Vocation Newsletter*

August, 2014

## **“Living with Benedict” Weekend is Aug. 15-17**

Reservations are now being taken for the next “Living with Benedict” monastic experience retreat that will be held at the abbey over the weekend of August 15-17. The retreat will begin with vespers at 5:15 PM on Friday evening for the feast of the Assumption. If any participants have need to attend Mass for the Holy Day, a Mass will be celebrated at the same time in another chapel (notify Fr. Finbar beforehand). Guestrooms are available on a first come, first serve basis. Participants will join the monks for the Liturgy of the Hours, daily Mass, and community meals. Special conferences will be scheduled and a Holy Hour with Eucharistic adoration will conclude Friday’s activities. On Saturday, retreatants will take a break to experience some of the typical work performed by monks in formation. Prayer experiences will include a Living Rosary and time spent in Lectio Divina (Spiritual Reading). A video on Benedictine life will be part of a roundtable discussion on questions about monastic life Saturday evening concluding with Compline (night prayer). After Sunday morning prayer (Lauds), Mass, and breakfast, the weekend will officially end with a special closing conference before lunch. Retreatants are also invited to remain at the monastery Sunday afternoon if they are interested in visiting the annual Feast of the Assumption street festival in nearby Little Italy either during the afternoon or with some of the monks Sunday evening for the closing procession and fireworks. Please contact **Fr. Finbar** at 216-721-5300, ext. 273 or at [finbar@cbhs.edu](mailto:finbar@cbhs.edu).



**Bro. Louis prepares a vestment for a feast day.**

## **Summer Retreats and Celebrations Keep Monks Busy and Renewed**

Even though school is not in session, the summer months have provided the monks of Saint Andrew Abbey with a variety of opportunities for individual and community spiritual growth. The annual monastic retreat was held at **Loyola Retreat House** in Clinton, Ohio from June 9-12. The retreat master was **Fr. Roman Paur, OSB** of St. John’s Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota. Abbey seminarians **Brothers Louis Carey, OSB, Thomas Sanders, OSB, and Conrad Wald, OSB** traveled to St. Paul’s Cathedral in Pittsburgh on June 14 for the priesthood ordination of classmates from St. Vincent Seminary. Also driving to St. Paul’s Cathedral was **Bishop Roger Gries, OSB** and **Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB** on June 17 for the funeral Mass of Benedictine High School alumnus and famed Pittsburgh Steeler Super Bowl coach **Chuck Noll**. **Bishop Roger** and former **Abbot Clement** celebrated Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine in Euclid, Ohio on July 25 for the annual Cleveland Slovak celebration of the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne. **Prior Joachim, Fr. Gerard, Fr. Justin, and Bros. Louis and Thomas** also attended.

## ***Stability Suspended for Monastic Adventures and Traveling***

Saint Benedict says in his Holy Rule (Chapter 67) that when monks are sent on a journey the rest of the community is to pray for them before they leave, while they are gone, and when they return. He calls for such spiritual protection “in case they may have been caught off guard on the way by seeing some evil thing or hearing some idle talk.” Each night after the Office of Readings and the Marian Antiphon, the monks of Saint Andrew Abbey pray, “May the Divine Assistance be with us always. And with our absent brethren.” Well, since Lent, a number of monks of the abbey have been involved in some rather interesting travels.

Assistant Principal and Academic Dean **Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB** helped to chaperone an historic trip to Rome by the Benedictine High School Men’s Chorus from March 13-17. The 23 students along with their director Mr. Joshua Chenoweth and several parents enjoyed the sights and sounds of the Eternal City while there to participate in the musical Feast of Peace and Brotherhood. The chorus was privileged to sing for a Mass in Saint Peter’s Basilica (below) that was concelebrated by **Fr. Michael**. The “musical monk” was home for about two months during which time he was appointed as the new principal of Benedictine High School



when he assumed his other role as the “Bishop of Tours” joining his diocesan priest brother **Fr. Steven Brunovsky** on a pilgrimage to France with Fr. Steve’s parishioners of Saint Hilary’s Parish in Fairlawn, Ohio in June that made visits to Poitiers where St. Hilary is buried and Tours where St. Martin had his monastery a century before the time of St. Benedict among other French pilgrimage sites.

BHS president **Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB** was invited by his physician, Dr. Nick Ksenich of Avon, to join him on a pilgrimage to the canonization of Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II on Mercy Sunday, April 27, at Saint Peter’s Square in Rome that drew

close to one million pilgrims. The trip for the historic rite was sponsored by Franciscan University of

Steubenville where Dr. Ksenich’s son Ryan is a student. Ryan was a participant in a past “Living with Benedict” weekend..... Junior professed **Bro. Paul Culver, OSB** returned to Columbus, Ohio for the Catholic Youth Summer Camp the weeks of June 15 and July 20. This is a relatively new program that is now welcoming grade school and high school students from several Ohio dioceses. Organizers encourage younger religious and seminarians to attend to promote reflection on vocations.

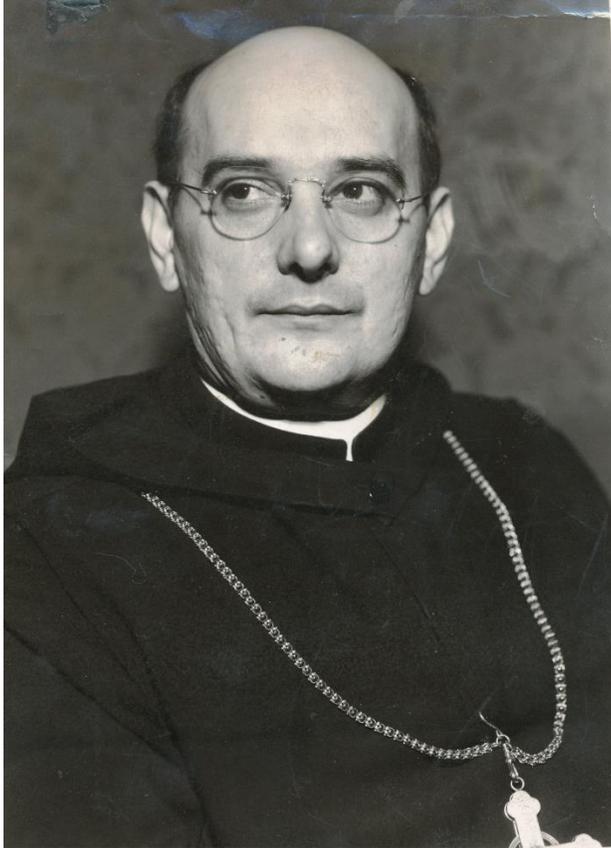
**Bro. Paul** also drove to Pittsburgh at the end of July for his final class of the Epiphany Certification Program in Formative Spirituality. Junior professed **Bro. Conrad Wald, OSB** participated in the Summer School for Benedictine monks in formation that was held this year at Saint Vincent Archabbey from June 14-28. The theme was “Building a Dynamic and Joyful Community Spirit.” He also found time to cheer on the German national soccer team to a World Cup Championship with other Deutschers at the German Cultural Center in North Olmsted on July 13.



**Brother Conrad**

# Monks Prepare to Elect 7<sup>th</sup> Abbot During August Voting

**Abbot President Hugh Anderson, OSB** will travel from St. Procopius Abbey in Lisle, Illinois on Tuesday, August 5 to conduct the election of the seventh abbot in the history of Saint Andrew Abbey. For the past year, the affairs of the abbey have been handled by **Fr. Gary Hoover, OSB**, who was named as the administrator of the community by Abbot Hugh following the resignation of **Abbot Christopher Schwartz, OSB** for health reasons last summer. At the time Fr. Gary had been serving as the prior of the community. By a strange coincidence, the election will take place exactly 80 years to the week of the election of the first abbot of Saint Andrew Abbey, **Abbot Stanislaus Gmuca, OSB**, who was elected on **August 8, 1934**.



**First Abbot Stanislaus Gmuca, OSB**

In his Holy Rule, Saint Benedict devotes Chapter 2 to the qualities that an abbot should have. He writes, “He must so accommodate and adapt himself to each one’s character and intelligence that he will not only keep the flock entrusted to his care from dwindling, but will rejoice in the increase of a good flock.” Saint Benedict does not give many details about how the election of the abbot is to take place. In Chapter 64 he says that either the entire community or a part of the community votes for the abbot. Prior to the Second Vatican Council in the 1960’s only the priest-monks of the monastery were allowed to vote since brother monks did not profess solemn vows at that time.

According to the Constitutions and the Directory of the American Cassinese Congregation of Benedictine abbeys to which Saint Andrew’s belongs, all monks in solemn vows may vote for the abbot either in person or through a proxy. Currently, there are 27 monks in solemn vows who are eligible to have a vote in this election. Bishop Roger does not retain a vote due to his episcopal elevation.

The Constitutions explain that in order to be validly elected abbot, a monk must be at least 30 years of age, in solemn vows at least 7 years and be an ordained priest.

Therefore, there are 18 priest-monks who have the basic qualifications to be elected abbot. The actual candidates will be identified through a nominating ballot on the first day of the election when each elector will be asked to submit the names of two monks he believes would make a good abbot. When these votes are counted, monks who were named the most times will be asked to continue in the election as candidates. Each one who agrees will be asked to leave the voting room so that a “scrutinium” or discussion of his strengths and weaknesses may take place with confidentiality.

The next day the actual voting will take place. On the first three ballots, a candidate must get two-thirds of the votes cast to be elected abbot. If there is no election after three ballots, then a simple majority will be sufficient for election for the next three ballots. Only 6 ballots are permitted or the election will be postponed. After the election, the new abbot immediately assumes authority when the Abbot President confirms the results of the vote. Within three months the local bishop gives him the Abbatial Blessing.

# Fr. Placid to Celebrate Historic 70<sup>th</sup> Ordination Anniversary

**Fr. Placid Pientek, OSB**, the senior member of Saint Andrew Abbey in age (96 years) and profession (75 years) will also reach the longest term of service as a priest in the history of our community when he marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination which took place on **September 23, 1944**. Fr. Placid resides now at Regina Health Center in Richfield, Ohio but is always eager to make a visit to the monastery when he has to go out for doctors' appointments. He is hoping to be able to have a special Mass and dinner for friends and benefactors around the time of his anniversary.

Fr. Placid is now the second oldest monk of the over 750 monks of the monasteries of the American Cassinese Congregation to which Saint Andrew Abbey belongs. Currently the oldest monk is **Fr. Damian DuQuesnay, OSB of Saint Leo Abbey in Florida who was born July 24, 1918 only two days before Fr. Placid who was born on July 26, 1918**. Fr. Placid is the oldest in profession of vows in the Congregation. He is the only monk in the Congregation who professed before 1940 having made his vows on July 11, 1939. He also is the senior priest-monk in years of ordination. The next senior priest-monks are **Fr. Fintan Bromenshenkel, OSB** and **Fr. Magnus Wenninger, OSB**, both of Saint John's Abbey in Minnesota who were ordained in 1945.

Fr. Placid is pictured seated at right with **Bishop Roger Gries, OSB**, who had Fr. Placid as his novice master in 1956-57. Fr. Placid also served as prior and procurator of the abbey and high school for many years.



## New Abbey Website Opened

When he is not working to beautify the abbey grounds, junior professed monk **Bro. Paul Culver, OSB** has been working on creating a new abbey website. The new site can be reached at the following address: **[standrewabbey.org](http://standrewabbey.org)**. Brother Paul is also on Twitter **@standrewabbey**. But if you want to see the beautiful abbey grounds and really appreciate them, you need to visit in person!

