A school year that started with a 25-year high in enrollment concluded on May 14 with a commencement ceremony that celebrated the awarding of 41 degrees to seminarians and lay students.

The graduates of Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology accepted their diplomas from the Right Rev. Justin DuVall, OSB, archabbot of Saint Meinrad Archabbey and chairman of the school’s Board of Trustees.

The convocation address was given by Abbot Martin Werlen, OSB, of Einsiedeln Abbey in Switzerland, the mother abbey of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. He spoke about the Church’s prophetic dimension. “The proclamation of the Gospel is a prophetic task,” he said. “The Gospel is not just good news for past times. It is good news for our times.”

Receiving Master of Divinity degrees were:
- Dustin Boehm, Archdiocese of Indianapolis;
- Michael Chrisman, Diocese of Pueblo;
- Noah Diehm, Archdiocese of Dubuque;
- Jeffrey Estacio, Diocese of Lexington;
- Luke Ferris, Diocese of Green Bay;
- Jorge Gómez Alvarado, Diocese of Tulsa;
- Ryan Harpole, Diocese of Owensboro;
- Ryan McCoy, Diocese of Biloxi;
- Zachary Peterson, Diocese of New Ulm;
- Sean Pogue, Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana.

Receiving Master of Arts in Catholic Philosophical Studies degrees were:
- Peter Bucalo, Archdiocese of Louisville;
- Michael Cronin, Diocese of Sioux City;
- James Dennis Jr., Diocese of Owensboro;
- Thomas Dunn Jr., Diocese of Joliet;
- Aaron Foshee and Lance Warren, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City;

Continued on page 5
Monks’ Personalals

Fr. Thomas Gricoski had his dissertation proposal accepted by the doctoral commission at the Catholic University of Louvain. His degree will be in philosophy and the title of his dissertation is “From Finite to Infinite: The Concept of Essential Being and the Problem of Transcendence in Edith Stein’s ‘Finite and Eternal Being.’”

Fr. Timothy Sweeney was appointed by Archbishop Daniel Buechlein as temporary administrator of St. Charles Parish, Bloomington, IN, on February 15. He will remain until a new pastor is appointed and takes over in July.

Archabbot Justin DuVall attended a meeting of the Congregational Council at Marmion Abbey in Aurora, IL, February 16-18 and the annual meeting of the Indiana Bishops and Major Superiors in Indianapolis, IN, on March 6-7.

Fr. Adrian Burke served as the retreat master for the March Oblate Retreat on the topic, “Encountering God through the Liturgy of the Hours.”

Br. Matthew Mattingly attended the National Catholic Education Association’s annual conference in New Orleans, LA, to represent Snail’s Pace on April 27-29.

Br. Martin Erspamer attended the National Stationery Show in New York, NY, to represent Snail’s Pace on May 12-18.

Archabbot Justin DuVall traveled to Europe June 8-18 to meet and visit with Fr. Thomas Gricoski in Louvain, Fr. Ephrem Carr and Fr. Paul Nord in Sant’ Anselmo and Fr. Prior Cassian Folsom in Norcia. +

Sign up for the e-newsletter

If you’d like to receive brief updates on what’s happening at Saint Meinrad, you can sign up for a free e-newsletter. Every few weeks, you will receive a newsletter in your e-mail’s inbox.

To sign up, go to the link on the front page of the website: www.saintmeinrad.edu. Or, send an e-mail to news@saintmeinrad.edu +

Two ordained deacons at Saint Meinrad

Two seminarians studying at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology received the order of deacon from the Most Rev. Christopher J. Coyne, auxiliary bishop of Indianapolis, at the Archabbey Church on April 30.

Auxiliary Bishop Christopher Coyne exits the church with new deacons Jerry Byrd (center) and Br. Romain Botta, OSB.

The newly ordained deacons are Jerry Byrd, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, and Br. Romain Botta, OSB, Monastère de l’Incarnation, Togo, West Africa.

Other members of the class will be ordained at various times in their respective dioceses.

In the Catholic faith, a deacon can preach, baptize, witness marriages, offer Communion to the sick and aged, and perform other ministerial duties. The newly ordained deacons are transitional deacons, meaning they are preparing for ordination to the priesthood. Many Catholic dioceses also have permanent deacons, who carry out the same roles, but are not studying for the priesthood. +
Br. Mario, Br. Maurus and Br. Andrew have been locked in a friendly chess rivalry for more than 30 years.

After the evening meal, three monks slip quietly into hard-backed chairs around a small wooden table in the monastery calefactory (the monks’ common gathering area). Two sets of chess pieces are produced from small drawers, located on either side of the low table, and placed hurriedly on the board.

Hands move quickly—sometimes the pace is feverish, other times the players halt to contemplate a new strategy. But, always, there is a friendly banter as each assesses his opponent’s move.

“\textbf{It's not a competition. It doesn't matter who wins—we're just having fun here.}”

\textit{Br. Mario Ibison, OSB}

Br. Maurus Zoeller and Br. Mario Ibison have been at this friendly chess competition for more than 30 years, at times playing eight to 10 games per week. They began playing in the 1970s after Br. Maurus was assigned to work at the Guest House.

Following his recent return from years of work in Guatemala, Br. Andrew learned his skills from a brother-in-law and was playing long before he joined the monastery.

Br. Mario has a small chess set in his cell that he practices on regularly and also uses a computer chess program to hone his skills. He has the computer program figured out and usually beats it. He admits the game has a more difficult setting, but on that setting the computer takes too long to make its move.

The simple table and board that the monks play on were created years ago by Br. Maurus in the Archabbey’s carpenter shop. Its checkered top shows signs of use. The two side drawers were custom built to hold a set of chess pieces that Br. Maurus brought back from a trip to Ireland in the 1970s. On his return, he had two more sets of pieces molded at Abbey Press and hand painted by one of the monks. Br. Maurus still has an extra unpainted set in his cell.

Br. Mario looks up at Br. Maurus from across the board with a grin.

“Checkmate!” he says. The board is quickly cleared and Br. Andrew takes his place across from Br. Mario.

Br. Maurus Ibison has joined in the matches. Br. Mario says the three have slowed down in recent years, averaging about five games per week, including several evening games and occasionally a Sunday afternoon match. Each game lasts an average of 30 to 45 minutes.

“It’s not a competition,” says Br. Mario. “It doesn’t matter who wins—we’re just having fun here.” While each says the games are not competitive, they keep a running tally of wins and losses and each knows exactly where he stands. Hundreds of games have already been played this year and Br. Mario appears to have a slight edge at the moment. Someone suggests he’s been cheating and everyone gets a good laugh.

“It’s an enjoyable game,” says Br. Maurus. “It’s relaxing and it also keeps your mind active.”

“Especially when you’re getting older,” teases Br. Mario, pointing at Br. Maurus. “We’ve lost some of that competitive spirit, but he knows he’d rather beat me every time if he could.”

Br. Maurus has been playing chess since 1951, shortly after joining the monastery. He learned to master the game from several older monks in the monastery at that time. Br. Mario, on the other hand,
Events on the Hill

August 1-5
Guest House Retreat: “Bringing to Life the Word of God in Song” (1st Session) by Fr. Columba Kelly, OSB.

August 8-12
Guest House Retreat: “Bringing to Life the Word of God in Song” (2nd Session) by Fr. Columba Kelly, OSB.

August 26-28
Guest House Retreat: “Simplicity Retreat Revised: A Way of Life” by Fr. Noël Mueller, OSB.

September 2-4
Guest House Retreat: “Pray Your Way to Happiness” by Br. Maurus Zoeller, OSB.

September 9-11
Guest House Retreat: “What Did Jesus Know about Eucharist?” by Fr. Jeremy King, OSB.

September 13
Dolle Lecture on Church Art and Architecture by Bernard Gruenke, president of Conrad Schmitt Studio.

September 16-18
Guest House Retreat: “Pray Your Way to Happiness” by Br. Maurus Zoeller, OSB.

September 26
Gardner Lecture presents a one-man stage performance of G.K. Chesterton.

October 4
Marten Lecture on Homiletics, speaker to be announced.

October 29
Abbot Martin Marty Guild Day of Recollection.

For more information, contact Mary Jeanne Schumacher at (812) 357-6501 or visit our website www.saintmeinrad.edu

Use your IRA to make a gift—and save taxes

If you’re over age 70½, new tax laws now allow you to make charitable gifts through your traditional or Roth IRA, through the end of 2011. Gifts must be made by the IRA custodian directly to the charity and may not exceed $100,000.

Although no charitable deduction is allowed, you can avoid the tax you would otherwise pay on required distributions.

Giving from your IRA, rather than from other assets, may be especially appropriate if you use the standard deduction rather than itemizing your deductions. It might also be a good choice if you don’t need all of your required minimum distribution or you wouldn’t be able to deduct all of your charitable contributions because of deduction limitations.

Here are some opportunities available through this legislation:

Increase Your Annual Giving—I Ry funds are heavily taxed whenever you draw them out, at rates as high as 35%. You can divert the tax collector’s “take” from your IRA to Saint Meinrad.

For example, suppose you’re in a 25% tax bracket and normally send us a check for $1,000 every year. Instead of writing a check, you could instruct your IRA trustee to send us $1,333. If you had withdrawn $1,333 from your account, the tax would have been $333 in a 25% bracket. That $333 now can be used to assist our programs—all paid for by the IRS.

Annual Distribution Gifts—Under these rules, IRA gifts will count toward mandatory annual distributions required of individuals over age 70½. That means IRA gifts can reduce your 2011 taxes.

For example, Harold must withdraw at least $20,000 from his IRA this year, even though he doesn’t need the money for living expenses. Harold now can direct that the $20,000 be paid to Saint Meinrad from his IRA prior to taking any distribution and reduce his federal taxes by $5,600 in his 28% tax bracket.

Major Gifts—Lydia had planned to leave Saint Meinrad Archabbey and Seminary and School of Theology most of her IRA at her death, but says she would prefer to see her gift at work during her lifetime. Now Lydia plans to direct a $100,000 gift from her IRA in 2011.

For more information, please contact your IRA administrator directly. You may also contact Barbara Balka, director of planned giving, at (800) 682-0988 or bbalka@saintmeinrad.edu

More music of Saint Meinrad now on iTunes

Saint Meinrad recently added several new offerings to its iTunes U site. Saint Meinrad recordings and videos on iTunes are available free for use on personal computers, to download to iPods and iPhones or to copy to other portable media for personal use.

Some of the latest offerings include three albums recorded around the early 1970s: Songs Like Incense, Remaining Faithful, and Medieval and Contemporary Liturgical Music: Plainsong Mass for Epiphany Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy in English. The Blessed Virgin Mary by the Saint Meinrad Chancel Choir was recorded circa 1960s. Album descriptions and set lists are included with the music.

Also added this year are five Monte Cassino pilgrimage talks from the May pilgrimages and a video recording of Merton: From Jazz to Chant, which several monks contributed to. It was recorded in December 2010 at the Merton Institute for Contemplative Living in Louisville, KY.

Other iTunes offerings include past Monte Cassino pilgrimages, guest lectures, chant, reunion events, and talks and retreats. You can find Saint Meinrad on iTunes at: www.saintmeinrad.com/itunes
Michael Keucher, Archdiocese of Indianapolis; Christopher Russell, Diocese of Knoxville; Trevor Schroeder and Scott Woods, Diocese of Toledo.

Receiving Master of Arts degrees in Catholic Thought and Life were: Susan Gallagher, Sandusky, OH; Brendan Kelly, Watkinsville, GA; Scott Lutgring, Greenwood, IN; Emily Murphy, Louisville, KY; Timothy O’Donnell, Fishers, IN; Andrew Reinhart, Tiffin, OH; Jonathan Stotts, Huntington, IN; Christine Vincent, North Vernon, IN.

Receiving Master of Theological Studies degrees were: Deberah Fleck, Jasper, IN; Br. Silas Henderson, OSB, Saint Meinrad Archabbey; Douglas Hudson and Sharon Schuhmann, Louisville, KY; Cynthia Kramer and Katie Soer, Lamar, IN; Kathi Latta, Diocese of Bridgeport; Byron Macias, Berwyn, IL; Kathleen Miller, Versailles, KY; Donna Murphy, Owensboro, KY; Michael Onuoha, Beaumont, TX; Angela Peach, Nashville, TN; David Proctor III, Greenwood, IN.

The School also awarded graduate certificates in Church History and Systematic Theology to Christine Vincent, North Vernon, IN; and in Scripture to Thomas Malewitz, Hardinsburg, KY.
Meet Student: Roseann Buchanan

Lay degree student studying for Master of Arts in Catholic Thought and Life
Hometown: Versailles, IN

Q. When did you begin your studies?
Fall of 2010

Q. What influenced you to begin study for a master’s degree in theology?
I almost switched from nursing into theology during my sophomore year at Valparaiso University while working on my BSN over 15 years ago. However, in 2007, I felt drawn into active parish ministry, especially as a catechist, after spending many hours in front of the Blessed Sacrament at my home parish. I discovered that ministry within a parish had many parallels to my practice as a nurse—listening to, caring for, educating, sharing with, sacrificing for and loving others. During this time, I was also blessed by close friendships with individuals who were devoting their entire lives to God and His Church.

I first decided to enroll in distance education through Franciscan University of Steubenville. After about a year, a conversation with [Saint Meinrad lay student] Christine Vincent persuaded me to apply at Saint Meinrad. I can honestly say that my studies are a result of chasing after the object of my heart’s desire—Jesus Christ. Through my studies, I hope to discover where He is eventually leading me.

Q. What else are you doing besides seeking a master’s degree (work, family, volunteer work)?
I am the wife of Ron Buchanan and the mother of Natalie, Samuel and Gabriel. I am also a stepmother to Brittany and Bryan. I have just left 12 years of emergency room nursing and taken on a position as a float nurse within Columbus Regional Hospital. In this position, I am assigned based on the daily needs of the different departments. In other words, I go where I am called. Unfortunately, I have had to give up many of my parish activities as I devote time to my studies. I chalk it up to entering this new phase in my life.

Q. Favorite saint and why?
St. Teresa of Avila. I have often told others that it is not us who go after the saints, but they chase after us. St. Teresa is no exception. I can relate to elements of her personality, especially her straight-forwardness, perseverance, wisdom and fearless love of God. The girl had spunk!

Q. Favorite Scripture verse and why?
Psalm 30:11-12: “You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.” This scripture verse is very near and dear to me. It is the song of the lost who have been found, the song of the blind who have been given new sight, the song of the rejected who have found love. It is the soul’s song of resurrection, which is only made possible through the love of Christ.

Q. What aspect of your coursework has been the most rewarding?
The development of broader understanding within the Church, allowing me to see the “bigger picture.” As I study and gain understanding of the sacredness of the priesthood, I better understand my essential role and worth within the Body of Christ. The sense of connectedness with those seeking, learning and serving God within the Universal Church is phenomenal!

Q. What aspect of your coursework has been the most challenging?
Learning to manage my time and juggle my responsibilities while obtaining a graduate degree. Also, trying to find daily, quiet time to maintain a prayer life. Without this, I might as well forget the rest.

Q. What plans, if any, do you have after you receive your degree?
The two areas that I have been directed toward are bioethics and pastoral counseling. Recently, however, the role of pastoral associate has been brought to my attention as another area for me to look into. Hmmmm…we’ll see.

Eight members of the Board of Overseers of Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology completed their terms this spring. From left are Fr. Jason Gries, John Chappell, Barbara Ann Popp, Mark Schroeder, Suzanne Yakimchik, Dr. John Pulcini, John Lueken and Deacon Dunn Cumby.
President-Rector Fr. Denis Robinson, OSB, announced several new appointments in the Seminary and School of Theology in May.

Agnes Kovacs
of Louisville, KY, joins the staff as the associate director of Lay Degree Programs. Agnes earned a Master of Theological Studies degree from Saint Meinrad and a Master of Science degree in chemistry and mathematics with an education minor from Eotvos Lorand University of Sciences in Budapest, Hungary.

She served as director of catechetical ministry for the Church of the Holy Spirit in Memphis, TN, from 2002-2009. Most recently, she was director of lifelong formation and education at the Catholic Community of St. Patrick in Louisville, KY.

She is currently an Executive Committee member of the National Association of Parish Catechetical Directors and a Leadership Committee member of the Senate of Religious Educators.

Clare Haden
will join the staff as an oral communications specialist. She will work with the Mader Learning Center to enhance students’ oral communication skills by teaching classes in the English language learning program and coaching both international and native-born American students on voice production, accent modification and speech communication.

Clare earned a bachelor of fine arts in musical theater from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in 2000 and a master of fine arts in acting with an emphasis on voice at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2009.

She has taught undergraduate voice and speech classes, coached individuals on pronunciation and communication skills, vocal coached productions in the Madison area, taught voice and dialect classes at UW-Milwaukee, as well as the graduate level voice and speech class at UW-Madison.

Currently, Clare is the company manager and education director of the Rocky Mountain Repertory Theatre in Grand Lake, CO.

Fr. Tobias Colgan, OSB, and Fr. Julian Peters, OSB, have been named new formation deans in the Seminary and School of Theology. Both will continue their work with the English as a Second Language program.

In addition, Fr. Tobias will continue as the director of the Together in One Place celibacy formation program, and Fr. Julian remains as the director of permanent deacon formation.

From left, Abbey Press employees Sue Ann Kloeck, Amie Jones and Ashley Verkamp talk with vendors in the Snail’s Pace booth at the National Stationery Show in New York this May.
The Benedictine monks at Saint Meinrad Archabbey celebrated the 50-year priesthood jubilees of Fr. Timothy Sweeney, OSB, and Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB; and the 25-year jubilees of Fr. Subprior Guerric DeBona, OSB, and Fr. Harry Hagan, OSB, on May 29.

Fr. Timothy was born July 24, 1935, in Indianapolis, IN. He made his profession of vows on August 15, 1956, and was ordained on May 7, 1961. Fr. Timothy has a bachelor of arts degree from Saint Meinrad College and a Master of Divinity from the Seminary and School of Theology, a licentiate in sacred theology from Pontifical International Institute of St. Anselm, Rome, and a licentiate in philosophy from Institut Catholique, Paris, France.

From 1968-78, Fr. Timothy taught philosophy at Saint Meinrad College. In 1970, he was named subprior (third in leadership) of the monastic community, serving in that role for five years. He was then appointed prior (second in leadership) of the monastic community, from 1975-78.

On June 2, 1978, Fr. Timothy was elected archabbot. Under his leadership, construction was completed on a new monastery and a new library. In addition, the former monastery was renovated into St. Anselm Hall and plans were begun to renovate the Archabbey Church—a continuation of the project begun in the 1960s.

After resigning as archabbot in 1995, Fr. Timothy served as pastor of Parish of the Immaculate in Owensboro, KY, and St. Paul Parish in Tell City, IN. He currently teaches philosophy in the Seminary and School of Theology.

Fr. Meinrad was born April 14, 1934, in Indianapolis, IN. He made his profession of vows on August 15, 1956, and was ordained on May 7, 1961. Fr. Meinrad earned his bachelor’s degree and Master of Divinity from Saint Meinrad and a Master of Arts in political theory from Butler University.

From 1962-67, Fr. Meinrad taught history at the Saint Meinrad High School. In 1968, he was appointed assistant professor of history and political science at the Saint Meinrad College, where he served for 10 years. From 1971-74, Fr. Meinrad served as chairman of the Archabbey Liturgy Committee and master of ceremonies II.

In 1984, he was appointed associate director for the Saint Meinrad Seminary Alumni Association. One year later, he was appointed alumni director, a position he held for eight years. In 1995, he was named to his current position as director of the Benedictine Oblate program.

Fr. Guerric was born January 30, 1955, in Jamaica, NY. He made his profession of vows on August 6, 1981, and was ordained on May 4, 1986. Fr. Guerric has a bachelor’s degree from State University of New York, a Master of Divinity from Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology and a doctorate from Indiana University.

From 1985-89, Fr. Guerric served as vocation director for the monastery. From 1986-89, he taught English literature at Saint Meinrad College. He also served as associate dean of students and dean of college seminarians.

Currently, he serves as subprior and novice and junior master for the monastery. He is also director of Hispanic ministry and associate professor of homiletics for the Seminary and School of Theology, as well as formation dean for the monastic students.

Fr. Harry was born January 10, 1947, in Louisville, KY. He made his profession of vows on August 24, 1972, and was ordained on September 20, 1986. Fr. Harry has a bachelor’s degree in English from Saint Meinrad College, a Master of Divinity from Saint Meinrad School of Theology, a Master of Arts in religious studies from Indiana University, and a licentiate and doctorate in sacred Scripture from Pontifical Biblical Institute.

Fr. Harry joined the faculty of Saint Meinrad School of Theology in 1979, where he has served as associate dean of students, dean of students and provost-vice rector. He also was novice and junior master in the monastery. He is currently an associate professor of Scripture in the Seminary and School of Theology.
Summer activities abound on the Hill

“One Bread, One Cup” participants joined in several ice-breaker activities as the first of three summer liturgical leadership conferences got under way.

Workers installed heating and air infrastructure as the renovation of St. Bede Hall begins to take shape.

Antique farm equipment dots the grounds near the St. Meinrad Fire Department. A farm equipment show and demonstration were among many events surrounding the town of St. Meinrad’s sesquicentennial celebration June 9-11.

The Waninger Timber and Trucking parade float passes by the Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center during the St. Meinrad sesquicentennial celebration in June. Other events included an opening Mass in the St. Meinrad Catholic Church and tours of the Archabbey.

Workers prepare to install a new tile roof on St. Bede Hall during summer renovation. The renovations will provide needed space for school programs.

“One Bread, One Cup” participants worship in the School chapel.
Abbot Gerald Benkert, OSB, O’34 (’23-35) the founding abbot of Marmion Abbey, became the 19th person to receive Saint Meinrad’s Distinguished Alumnus Award. The award was bestowed July 19 during the annual Alumni Reunion.

Due to his health, Abbot Gerald could not attend the Reunion, but Marmion’s current leader, Abbot John Brahill, OSB, O’81 (’76-81) accepted the honor on his behalf during the reunion banquet.

When you talk with Abbot Gerald or read the Memoirs he wrote in 2009 of his—and Marmion Abbey’s—story, it is hard to ignore the numbers.

Abbot Gerald is 101 years old. In 1947, at the age of 37, he was named the first abbot of a new abbey in Aurora, IL, founded by Saint Meinrad Archabbey. At the time, he had been the rector of Saint Meinrad Minor Seminary for three years.

He served as Marmion’s abbot for 22 years. Then, upon his “retirement” in 1969, he decided to learn Spanish and join his confreres in Guatemala, where they served at Marmion’s priory and teaching at its minor seminary.

He spent more than 30 years doing mission work in Guatemala, during some turbulent times, including the devastating earthquake in 1976 that killed more than 30,000 people and several years of guerrilla violence during the 1980s. For the two months each year that the seminary was not in session, he would return to Marmion and raise funds for the Guatemalan mission.

Since his permanent return to Marmion Abbey, Abbot Gerald has continued to take part in the prayer life of the monastic community. In addition, he has written a book of memoirs about his life and the history of Marmion, which was founded in 1933. Their history is clearly intertwined.

But let’s back up a little further…

Francis Benkert, often called “Franz” by his family, was born in 1909 in Louisville, KY. Already, several men in the Benkert family were members of the Saint Meinrad monastic community, including his father’s uncle, Abbot Athanasius Schmitt, OSB; and two brothers, Br. Innocent and Fr. Boniface; and a cousin, Fr. Fidelis.

Francis entered the seminary at Saint Meinrad after his eighth-grade graduation from Holy Name School in Louisville. He arrived on September 11, 1923. “With the other new students, I was then assigned a bed in a large dormitory, a desk in the front row of the huge study hall, one of the front pews in the chapel, and a place at table in the dining room,” he wrote of his first day.

“Looking back over my many years, I can say that the great truths in this antiphon have served as guiding principles through the various stages of my life—monastic, priestly and abbatial—even though I may not have been fully aware of it at the time.”

Abbot Gerald Benkert, OSB

During his third and fourth years of seminary, he debated whether to join the monastic community—as he originally intended—or become a diocesan priest in Louisville. The main attraction of studying for the Diocese of Louisville was that he’d probably get to study at the North American College in Rome—quite a dream for a 16-year-old Kentucky boy in 1926.

Abbot Gerald Benkert, center, laughs with Pope John Paul II during his visit to Guatemala in 1983.
Eventually, however, he discerned that he wanted to enter the monastery, which he did with five others on August 5, 1928. He was convinced that this was God’s will for him. A year later, he took the name Gerald when he made his first vows.

On November 30, 1932, he became a fully professed member of the Saint Meinrad community. He was ordained a priest on May 22, 1934.

After ordination, Saint Meinrad’s Abbot Ignatius Esser, OSB, sent the young Fr. Gerald for graduate studies that summer at DePaul University in Chicago, where he stayed at the Marmion priory. He then returned to Saint Meinrad to begin teaching Latin in the minor seminary.

In 1936, Abbot Ignatius sent Fr. Gerald to Catholic University to begin a program of graduate studies in philosophy. After he received a master’s degree, his studies were interrupted when Abbot Ignatius appointed him as headmaster of Marmion Military Academy for two years. He then returned to Catholic University to complete the requirements for his doctorate.

In 1942, he returned to Saint Meinrad to teach philosophy I and II in the Major Seminary. While continuing teaching, he was appointed rector of the Minor Seminary, a post he held for three years from 1944-1947.

During the Easter break at Saint Meinrad Minor Seminary in 1947, Fr. Gerald traveled to Boston for a meeting of the American Catholic Education Association. While he was away, Abbot Ignatius received word from Rome of the establishment of Marmion as an independent abbey and approval of his request that Fr. Gerald be named the first abbot.

Because the nation’s telephone operators had gone on strike, Abbot Ignatius sent word of the appointment to Fr. Gerald by telegram. But due to a mix-up at the hotel, he didn’t receive the telegram until a day after it had been delivered. By the time the hotel clerk gave it to him, six other telegrams had arrived—all congratulating him on his new appointment!

During the more than two decades that Abbot Gerald was the Marmion superior, he provided both the spiritual and physical foundations the new community needed to thrive. Among his many accomplishments were:

- The abbey purchased more than 200 acres on which to build the monastery and other buildings.
- Marmion Military Academy relocated to the property and a new school complex was built, consisting of a classroom building, dormitory, gymnasium, dining hall and power plant.
- A Christmas tree farm was planted, which opened to the public in 1966 and provided a source of income for the abbey.
- The monastic community, which comprised 32 members when the abbey was established, grew to 75 monks by 1965.
- Enrollment at Marmion’s two campuses (a resident campus and a day school) peaked at 884 students in 1964.
- Responding to Pope John XXIII’s call for religious communities to serve Latin America, Marmion agreed to establish a priory and operate a minor seminary in Guatemala—the Collegio Seminario de San José.

In his memoirs, Abbot Gerald talks about what gave him the most satisfaction during his years as abbot. “Along with the satisfaction of providing a suitable monastery for our community…I can say that what gave me the most encouragement in the early years was that I could ‘rejoice in the increase of a virtuous flock.’”

Another of Abbot Gerald’s achievements was noted in his nomination for the Distinguished Alumnus Award. It points out that Abbot Gerald was “zealous to promote the beatification of Abbot Dom Columba Marmion by appointing Fr. Alcuin Deck [also a Marmion monk] as the postulator for the United States.”

Abbot Marmion, for whom Marmion Abbey was named, was the third abbot of Maredsous Abbey and a well-known spiritual writer. When he was beatified by Pope John Paul II in front of St. Peter’s Basilica on September 3, 2000, Abbot Gerald was privileged to join his confreres and friends to witness the historic event.

In Memoirs, Abbot Gerald sums up his life experiences by quoting a verse from an antiphon that is sung during Vespers every Saturday evening: “The will of God gives joy to the heart; we see all things in its light.”

“Looking back over my many years,” he writes, “I can say that the great truths in this antiphon have served as guiding principles through the various stages of my life—monastic, priestly and abbatial—even though I may not have been fully aware of it at the time.”

During the Easter break at Saint Meinrad Minor Seminary in 1947, Fr. Gerald Benkert poses for a photo with his brothers Joseph and Paul on the day of his first profession of vows, August 6, 1929.

Frater Gerald Benkert poses for a photo with his brothers Joseph and Paul on the day of his first profession of vows, August 6, 1929.

Br. Innocent Benkert, OSB, the Saint Meinrad Abbey tailor, and his nephew, Francis Benkert, wearing the new cassock his uncle made for him.
Sr. Mary Ruth Krack, OSB SS ('71), of the Monastery Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand, IN, died February 2.

Fr. David M. Lafferty SS ('79, '80), of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, OK, died February 1.


Mr. Randall Mills O’48 ('38-40), of Owensboro, KY, died April 14.

Mr. L. Conway Murchison Jr., CDR USN (Ret.) O’62 ('56-58), of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, died September 11, 2010.


Mr. Eugene Pelz O’48 ('40-42), of Goddard, KS, died March 17.

Fr. Leonard F. Reisz O’50 ('46-50), of the Diocese of Owensboro, KY, died February 17.


Fr. Theodore R. Sans O’59 ('55-59), of the Archdiocese of Louisville, KY, died April 21.

Mr. Richard H. Shafer C’99 ('95-98), of Clarksville, IN, died February 7.

Deacon John Simmons T’07 ('03-07), of Louisville, KY, died March 10.

Mr. James M. Watts O’63 ('57-59), of Lake Charles, LA, died February 20.

Mr. John W. Wellinger O’70 ('66-70), of Clairton, PA, died April 21. +

Carl Wertin of the Diocese of Pueblo was among several Saint Meinrad seminarians who traveled to the Hispanic conference at Mundelein Seminary.

Members of the monastic community gathered for a photo on the Archabbey church steps during their annual retreat May 25.
Remembering the steps

By Deacon Steve Durkee

These past few months, I have been reflecting on the joys of living a long life. In that series of reflections, a significant blessing has been my affiliation with Saint Meinrad and the many monks and friends I have met and become friends with because of that gift.

In remembering my first impressions of Saint Meinrad as a 14-year-old boy coming more than 100 miles from his home, many scenes come to mind. Certainly, the impression that we were a good distance from anywhere—these were the days before expressways and major highways; Abbey Church was the biggest church I had ever been in; the monks were the wisest “older men” I had ever met.

And no matter where you went on our limited end of the campus, there were the steps. Always at least one flight or more, up or down, to accomplish anything—classes, Morning Prayer, Mass, meals, recreation.

In almost 50 years of coming back to the Hill, I have often wondered about the stories those steps could tell about those of us blessed to use them. Young men on their first day in high school and being a bit frightened by all the rules and regulations. Young men entering the College and wondering if they were prepared for the rigors of seminary life. Somewhat older men entering theology and seeing “the end in sight.” Young deacons heading to Abbey Church for priestly ordination. All those thoughts and many more.

Decisions have been made to configure the campus differently than it first appeared to me in 1963, but the steps remain the same. I might not be able to get up and down them as quickly as I once did, but they remind me of what a privilege it was to make their acquaintance.

In many ways, the steps are a real reminder of the vow of stability the monks take at solemn profession. They, like the steps, will be connected to this place for the rest of their lives. Like many of us, there will be times they are away, but they know that this is home and they will return. Those of us blessed to be alumni can count on the same feeling, because of the always-present sense of hospitality shown not only by the monks, but also by the faculty, staff and workers who also call the Hill home.

As we finish plans for the upcoming Alumni Reunion, I am reminded that hundreds of young men and women about the same age as I was will be coming to the Hill, perhaps for their first time, with the “One Bread, One Cup” program. They, too, will probably be amazed at the Abbey Church and the grounds and will certainly receive the same type of wisdom from the monks and staff as I did—and yes, they, too, will experience “the steps.”

My prayer is that they will take the time to experience the peace and serenity of Saint Meinrad and experience the steps, as so many hundreds of us before have done, and then remember our time on “the Hill.”

Deacon Durkee O’75 (’63-65), of Erlanger, KY, is president-elect of the board of directors of the Saint Meinrad Alumni Association.

Alumni gifts support school’s many programs

The 2011-12 Alumni Annual Giving Program will kick off later this summer and Saint Meinrad is once again counting on the generosity of its alumni to provide support for the Seminary and School of Theology’s unrestricted annual fund.

“We count on our alumni, through the Alumni Annual Giving Program, to help provide the unrestricted dollars necessary to maintain the quality of our formation programs so we can continue to prepare the very best priests, permanent deacons and lay ministers,” says Duane Schaefer, director of development.

The amount Saint Meinrad charges students for tuition covers only about 63 percent of the costs of their education. Annual unrestricted gifts through the Alumni Annual Giving Program help make up the difference between the School’s actual expenses and student charges. “This enables us to keep our tuition rates competitive with other seminaries,” says Schaefer.

Alumni whose gifts qualify will receive this year’s premium, a full-color 18” x 24” poster (see photo) depicting seven well-known crosses and crucifixes around Saint Meinrad. Included in the images are the Christus in the Archabbey Church, the stone Celtic cross in front of St. Gregory Hall, and crucifixes located at Monte Cassino Shrine, in the Archabbey Cemetery, in St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel and in the two dining rooms on campus.

Alumni will qualify for the poster, which is suitable for framing, by making a gift of $200 or more or by making a first-time gift of $100 or more.

Pray for vocations

Alumni Board
they had with Palestinian leaders and reported on their travels.

Most Rev. Robert W. Donnelly, DD O’57 (*’49-53), retired auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Toledo, OH, was honored at a dinner gathering of priests and bishops of the diocese on March 6 celebrating his 80th birthday.

Msgr. T. Dominick Fullam T’93 (*’89-91), of the Diocese of Biloxi, MS, diocesan vicar general and pastor of St. Mary Parish in Biloxi, at the request of Bishop Roger Morin, was elevated to the title of monsignor on April 15.

Mr. Walter Glover T’06 (*’00-05), of Columbus, IN, is pastoral care chaplain for St. Vincent Salem Hospital and St. Vincent Dunn Hospital, Bedford. He now has climbed 62,000+ feet on four of the world’s Seven Summits, the latest Mount Kosciuszko in Australia, 7,310 feet high, in January. He has raised $60,000 for St. Vincent Hospital ministry youth obesity programs in south-central Indiana by making the climbs.

Dr. Luke T. Johnson O’70 (*’66-70), of Atlanta, GA, delivered the annual Finch Lecture at High Point University, High Point, NC, April 1.

Fr. Gerald J. Kirchhoff O’69 (*’61-65), of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, IN, pastor of Good Shepherd Parish in Indianapolis, received the Saint Theodora Distinguished Pastor Award for his contributions to Catholic education, at a luncheon on February 23.

Fr. Frederick W. Klotter T’96 (*’91-92), of the Archdiocese of Louisville, KY, pastor of St. Martin of Tours Church in Louisville, is one of 60 taking part in the latest Leadership Louisville class.

Fr. J. Ronald Knott O’70 (*’64-70), of the Archdiocese of Louisville, KY, director of Saint Meinrad’s Institute for Priests and Presbyterates, has a two-part series in the March and April issues of The Priest: “Claiming Your Pulpit for Spiritual Leadership” and “Claiming Your Pulpit for Personal Sanctification.”

Fr. Vincent P. Lampert T’89 (*’83-86), of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, IN, pastor of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood, is the official exorcist for the archdiocese. Interest in his work has peaked since the release of the movie, The Rite, which features the training and ministry of Fr. Gary Thomas, the exorcist of the Diocese of San Jose, CA. Fr. Lampert and Fr. Thomas took that training together in Rome in 2005.

Mr. Michael Loner T’14 (*’08-10), of Vincennes, IN, is the director of the Newman Club at Vincennes University.

Deacon Thomas McFeely PDP ’03 (*’99-03), of the Diocese of Richmond, VA, is serving on the National Advisory Council of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Fr. Glenn L. O’Connor O’80 (*’74-80), of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, IN, pastor of St. Ann and St. Joseph parishes in Indianapolis, received a Sanctity of Life Award during the Sanctity of Life dinner on March 3 for his assistance with Rachel’s Vineyard, a confidential abortion reconciliation retreat.

Ms. Linda Pifer T’98 (*’94-98), of Louisville, KY, was inducted into the Pinnacle Honor Society in April. The Society recognizes the academic and co-curricular achievements of non-traditional students.

Mr. Joseph M. Scheidler O’58 (*’52-57), of Chicago, IL, was featured in an article in The Criterion, the Indianapolis, IN, archdiocesan newspaper for April 29, 2011: “Veteran of pro-life movement sees ’mood change’ in U.S. on abortion.” He is president and founder of the Chicago-based Pro-Life Action League. On April 2, in Chicago, more than 400 people paid tribute to him at a banquet organized by Citizens for Pro-Life Society.

Fr. Stanislaw Sullivan, OSB T’10 (*’06-11), of St. Leo Abbey, St. Leo, FL, is now serving as prior (second in leadership) of the community. He had been serving as subprior.

Fr. Thomas S. Willis C’80 (*’76-80), of the Diocese of St. Augustine, FL, is an appointed member of the St. Augustine 450th Commemoration Commission. The appointment was announced by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazer, April 15, in Washington, D.C.

Continued on page 15
Saint Meinrad names new alumni director

Timothy Herrmann has been named the new director of alumni relations at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology. He replaces Joseph Cook, who in January was named the program coordinator for Saint Meinrad’s Institute for Priests and Presbyterates.

Mr. Herrmann graduated with a bachelor’s degree in communication management from the University of Dayton (Ohio). Since then, he has been the associate editor, vendor relations for the national office of Beta Theta Pi fraternity in Oxford, OH.

During the summers of 2007-2009, he served as a college intern for Saint Meinrad’s “One Bread, One Cup” program of liturgical leadership for youth. He was the communication and technology director for the conferences.

He has also held internships in communications at Chaminade-Julienne High School and Exceptional Innovation. While in college, he worked as a computer help desk associate at Chaminade University, community outreach coordinator at Flyer Enterprises–ArtStreet Café and a sales associate at Chaos Room arcade.

In other activities, he has been a retreat team member and co-director of Teens Encounter Christ for seven years; a member of the Allen County (Ohio) Correctional prison ministry retreat team; a volunteer, mentor and lector at St. Mary Parish/Miami University College Campus Ministry; master of ceremonies for the Hancock County (Ohio) American Cancer Society Relay for Life; and was a University of Dayton Chaminade Scholar and Student Government Association senator.

Mr. Herrmann begins his new position August 15.

Durkee, Ambre to lead Alumni Board

On September 1, Deacon Steve Durkee and Dr. Mark Ambre will begin terms as president and vice president, respectively, of the Alumni Association Board of Directors. Officers serve for two years and are eligible for a second two-year term unless their term as a member of the Board has ended.

Deacon Durkee

Deacon Steve Durkee O’75 (’63-65), of Erlanger, KY, will become the first permanent deacon to head the Alumni Board.

The current vice president of the Alumni Board, he is a private clinical counselor and an adjunct professor at the Athenaeum of Ohio in Cincinnati. As a permanent deacon at Mother of God Parish in Covington, KY, he works with youth ministry, marriage preparation and baptismal preparation.

After attending Saint Meinrad High School, Durkee earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting from the University of Cincinnati, followed by a master’s in religion from the Athenaeum of Ohio, and a master’s in agency and community counseling from Xavier University. He and his wife, Kathy, have two children.

Dr. Ambre

Dr. Mark Ambre O’77 (’69-73), will become vice president of the Board. He has been a pediatrician for more than 30 years. He earned his MD from the Indiana University School of Medicine in 1978.

He holds membership in the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Indiana State Medical Association, the Hamilton County Child Protection Team and the Finance/Personnel Committee of the Riverview Hospital Board.

Dr. Ambre is an executive committee member of the Suburban Health Organization. At his parish in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana, he serves on the stewardship committee and is a music minister.

He is the father of three children. He and his wife, Melissa, live in Noblesville, IN, where they are members of Our Lady of Grace Parish.

ALUMNI NEWS

Cont. from page 14

Mr. Stanley F. Zerkowski, SFO C’84 (’82-83), of Ormond Beach, FL, has an article in the May issue of Pastoral Liturgy Magazine, “Step One: Assess Strengths.” He discusses the teachable moment provided by the introduction of the new translations to be used in the liturgy.

ALUMNI NEWS

Cont. from page 14

Fr. Michael J. Zacharias T’02 (’96-02), of the Diocese of Toledo, OH, pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption, Van Wert, had the opportunity to minister to an inmate on death row at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility prior to his execution. The experience has led him to be an outspoken supporter of a movement to ban the death penalty in Ohio.

Mr. Timothy Herrmann has been named the new director of alumni relations at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology. He replaces Joseph Cook, who in January was named the program coordinator for Saint Meinrad’s Institute for Priests and Presbyterates.

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Alumnus Rev. Charles C. Thompson appointed bishop

Saint Meinrad alumnus Rev. Charles C. Thompson T’87 (’83-87) was named the new bishop of the Diocese of Evansville, IN, by Pope Benedict XVI on April 26. He attended Saint Meinrad School of Theology from 1983-87.

He is the 30th alumnus of Saint Meinrad to be named a Catholic bishop.

The new bishop was born April 11, 1961, in Louisville, KY. He was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Louisville on May 30, 1987.

Assignments after ordination include associate pastor, St. Joseph Pro-Cathedral, Bardstown, KY; part-time associate pastor, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Louisville, KY; metropolitan judicial vicar and director of tribunals; administrator, St. Peter Claver Parish, Louisville; and pastor, St. Augustine Parish, Lebanon, KY.

At the time of his appointment, he was vicar general of the Archdiocese and pastor of Holy Trinity Parish in Louisville.

He holds a bachelor’s degree in accounting from Bellarmine College, a Master of Divinity degree from Saint Meinrad School of Theology and a licentiate in canon law from St. Paul University in Ottawa, Canada.

Since 2002, he has been a visiting professor of canon law at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology.

Bishop Thompson’s appointment coincided with the resignation of Bishop Gerald A. Gettelfinger, O’61 (’49-61), who had served as the head of the Diocese of Evansville since 1989.

Bishop Thompson was ordained to the episcopacy on June 29 at Roberts Stadium in Evansville.