

SUMMER 2021

THE CLERESTORY

A Great Venture of Christian Discipleship | ST. PROCOPIUS ABBEY



The gift of God's grace in small feathered packages.



FROM THE EDITOR

We are back! The monks are well, healthy and fully vaccinated. Slowly, we are beginning to reconnect with friends and family in person and we want you to know that we miss you.

Like many of you, I have multiple tasks. One is advancement director and editor of this magazine. The other important job is to care for the monks as the infirmarian with our nurse Megan Gallagher McCatty, R.N., A.P.N. We spent the last sixteen months keeping the monastic community informed of the importance of wearing masks and remaining six feet away from others outside the abbey.

Much has happened within our community and our abbey building during the pandemic. At the end of January, 2020, we lost our Br. Raphael who lived at St. Patrick's Residence. During his wake and funeral, we got to meet many of his siblings and family members from Texas. Br. Raph always spoke about Czechs in Texas. In the fall, we started the renovations of the abbey and replacement of HVAC and domestic water pipes. We all moved to one side of the house so that we would not interact with outside workers. With a flair for delightful descriptions, Fr. James writes about the project in this issue. Then in January of 2021, we lost Fr. Jude Randall who also lived at St. Patrick's Residence. It was painful not to be able to allow guests to attend his wake and funeral, except his sister, Sister Dorothy Randall, C.S.J., and fellow community member Sister Joanne Valleri, C.S.J.

Finally, we want to wrap up the major campaign and say *Deo Gratias*, "Thank You." Due to large unexpected

bequests and the generous leadership of Mr. and Mrs. James and Patrice Lia, we exceeded our goal. Not only did they spearhead our campaign with a generous gift, they inspired us to create the "Fr. Ken Legacy Fund," a gift legacy divided between St. Joan of Arc Parish in Lisle and the abbey.

The abbey held its first public Mass in July and visitors are invited for daily Mass (the schedule is on page seventeen). Fully vaccinated visitors who present their cards as proof of vaccination do not have to wear masks. Others not vaccinated must wear a mask to protect everyone, including those monks who are health-challenged.

I invite you to read the Abbot's article on page eight to understand what this issue's cover is all about.

Please join us monks and pray daily for an end to this pandemic. May God bless all our readers and generous donors! May God bring us all together to eternal life. Amen.



Fr. T. Becket A. Franks, O.S.B.
Director, Abbey Advancement



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of the Monks of St. Procopius Abbey

THE CLERESTORY

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VOL. 14/NO. 1

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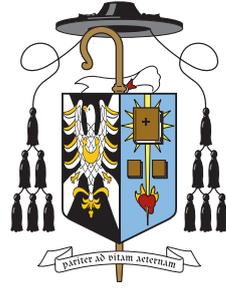
SHARE OUR MISSION

You can assist the monks in their great venture of Christian discipleship. If you are interested in giving to the monastic community, there are many options, such as:

- **Cash gifts**—You can make out a check to St. Procopius Abbey.
- **Stock gifts**—In making a gift of stock you may be eligible for a tax benefit.
- **Tribute or memorial gifts**—These honor loved ones, living or deceased; their names will be submitted to the abbey prayer ministry.
- **Matching gifts**—Many companies match or even double your charity.
- **Planned gifts**—You can make a bequest in your will or trust.
- **IRA Rollover**—A charitable rollover from your IRA may be a convenient way to make a gift to the abbey. Please call to receive more information about the potential benefits of this type of giving.

Our F.E.I.N. (Federal ID#) is 36-2169184. We are a tax-exempt institution and listed in the Official Catholic Directory under the diocese of Joliet, Illinois. Bequests, etc., are deductible for federal estate and gift tax purposes. Call the office of Abbey Advancement for assistance with a donation or for more information at (630) 829-9253.

Online Giving is available on the abbey website—procopius.org/giving.



DEAR FRIENDS,

A hundred-year flood. That term comes to mind when I think of the pandemic we have been enduring. The term describes a disastrous event that is rare, but at the same time not unheard of. That is true of the current pandemic. A disaster like this one is rare, but such disasters have happened in human history before. About one hundred years ago, there was the Spanish Flu, which killed an estimated 50 million when the population of the world was about a quarter of that today. The coronavirus has led to the death of 3.2 million.

These events understandably shake us and, as Pope Francis noted early in the pandemic, we are reminded of what is sturdy and lasting vs. not sturdy and lasting. In turn, these trying times teach us to put our trust and confidence in the things that last, and that last even past death. These things are God and His kingdom. As the Resurrection of Christ teaches us, the reign of God is forever and neither sin nor death can conquer it. Through faith and good works may we stand on the firm ground of God's unshakable kingdom!

Moreover, even in these difficult times, we are called to give thanks to God. That is something I try to remember, for there are many blessings to be thankful for. For one, I give thanks to God that, in a relatively short time, vaccines have been developed to help us through this pandemic. Here at the monastery the monks and I also give thanks to God that, thus far, the virus has not spread within our monastery walls.

I am also thankful for your support. Your donations for our major campaign, which ended not long before the pandemic broke out, have put us in a good position for the various projects we currently are undertaking. Thank you!

May God bless you! And may He bring the disaster of the current pandemic to an end soon!

Peace in Christ,





Founded in Faith, Funding our Future.

A CAMPAIGN FOR ST. PROCOPIUS ABBEY

Campaign Goal \$ 1,500,000

Gifts Pledged/Collected \$ 2,404,938*

*Includes donation from the Fr. Ken Legacy Fund.
Donations totaled \$55,740 which were split equally
between the abbey and St. Joan of Arc parish.

A PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

Almighty and ever-living God, God of all that is right and just, you are the giver of all good gifts. You inspire us through the scriptures and call us to share from our abundance as we learn that you love a cheerful giver.

We monks are grateful for the friends and funds we raised in these past three years. Many realized our need to support our ministry of prayer, work, and stability. Many continued to call and write inquiring about our safety and health in this time of pandemic. Bless all of them, Lord, in your kindness. Bless our long-time friends and bless those who donated for the first time in memory of Fr. Ken. While we are grateful for all of our gifts, you humble us by those bequests that surprised us and arrived on our doorstep in the spirit of friendship.

Finally, Lord God, keep us all safe in spirit, soul, and body as we ask for God's wisdom and understanding for those serving the common good through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

You are in our prayers

THE ABBOT AND MONKS PRAISE GOD FOR YOUR ABUNDANT
GENEROSITY TO OUR COMMUNITY. IN THIS TIME OF PANDEMIC,
KNOW THAT WE PRAY CONTINUALLY FOR YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY.

THANK YOU

We consider your financial help as a sacred trust since, according to our Holy Father St. Benedict, we are "to regard all the utensils of the monastery, including property, as if they were the sacred vessels of the altar."

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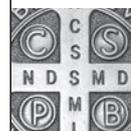
WE PRAY

O, God,
 you called
 Saint Procopius to
 gather to himself
 those who desired
 to draw closer to
 you through
 prayers of praise
 and service to their neighbor.
 By his intercession guide us
 also to pray and work in such
 a way that we may ever live in
 union with you. Through our
 Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
 who lives and reigns with you
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 God, for ever and ever.
 Amen.



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Rome was not demolished in a day

Ruminations about the major renovations of the abbey and about where I can put my stuff!

by Fr. James

ONCE OR TWICE A CENTURY, a major event, good or bad, upends the life of a monastery for an extended period of time. Many communities have endured a devastating fire (Mount Angel Abbey, in Oregon, has had two!). Almost every house has had major building projects. Some have gone through traumatic closures of an academic or other apostolic work.

By God's grace, St. Procopius Abbey has never had to deal with a natural or manmade disaster devastating its buildings. The most recent instance of a disruptive (though on the whole positive) change was leaving the first (early twentieth-century) monastery building in Lisle and crossing the street to a new church and monastery complex in mid-1970.

Tales still circulate of the move. Sequencing the transfer of the monks' possessions to their new home was the subject of a carefully-drafted plan. Much good all that did! When once the word got out, "We're moving today," it seemed that most everyone was eager that his "stuff" be given priority, lest a moment be lost in the arrangement of the monk's new cell. Legend had it that cries of "Me first" or "Me next" were oft heard that day.

Venerable monastic customs were threatened as the community adjusted to physical arrangements very different from those left behind. Previous discussions had never raised the topic of silence during breakfast. However, in an unfamiliar space for the first time, monks did not give a second thought at their first morning meal to sharing their impressions and experiences. Until Abbot Daniel Kucera walked into the refectory, noted the chatter, and without ceremony barked, "Breakfast is still a silent meal!" And, that was that, *per omnia saecula saeculorum!*

For the last several years, Abbot Austin and the monks have been facing up to the reality that the "new Abbey" reached its half-century mark in the summer of 2020. Thorough studies of the physical plant have shown that some major renovations are needed.

In particular, the HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) and the domestic water systems are reaching the end of their useful life. The community has been told by those who understand such matters that we should count ourselves blessed that they have held together so long!

Nor would the necessary replacement material be easily installed, since there was a tendency when building the structure to bury such unsightly features as pipes. The downside of that aesthetics-driven decision is, fifty years later, no small amount of demolition.

Jokes notwithstanding that the easiest procedure would be to move all the monks into a hotel until everything was finished, in practice we have had little alternative but to divide the building into sections that would be renovated in what was optimistically hoped would be an orderly fashion.

The area first selected to undergo some "jackhammer face-lifting" was the eastern wing of cloister rooms, those facing the backyard of the Abbey. As it happened, that wing was where most of the monks resided. So, during some hectic weeks of October and November 2020, many monks were busy with "temporary" relocation, mostly into the residential rooms of the southern wing.

Out of charity (and in the interest of self-preservation), I'll refrain from noting the challenges of others. I will say instead a word or two on what I faced as an intrepid pioneer of intraclaustal space warp.

The cell that I occupied until the end of October was the one assigned me when I returned from Roman studies in 1981. One can accumulate quite a bit in thirty-nine years! All of some importance and value, of course, when first it entered my life. But, excavating it lately from neglected corners often elicited the some musings on my part: "When did I get that? Whence? Why?"

Abbot Hugh often used to say (though he too much wanted to reach retirement alive to enforce) that monks should move every five years, just to force them to reduce useless clutter.



Abbot Austin has proven a worthy successor to this approach, making his mantra these months those mournful words, “Throw it away!” And indeed, the community has so far filled five or six large dumpsters with items no longer needed.

An archivist, of course, must preserve proper Benedictine moderation in such matters, lest the monastery lose irreplaceable parts of its heritage. To allow the Abbot to gain some humorous perspective on the matter, I early on informed him that I was bringing to my new cell only what I really needed. “Good.” Then, I continued, I’m figuring out where to store all the rest. Grim chuckle. When I repeated the witticism to another a little later, he overheard. “It wasn’t funny the first time,” he remarked.

Well, even less funny was a completely new challenge we all faced early in the Year of Grace 2021.

Our good architects and consultants, as noted above, had developed a sophisticated plan in which the repairs would be done, one section of the building at a time. Once what was called “Sequence I” was completed, those now-renovated rooms would be reoccupied, and what was cleverly designated “Sequence II” would begin.

So we naively thought! As progress was made, so was a momentous discovery, to wit, that the pipes were such that Sequence I could not be finished until the area of Sequence II was completed as well.

Oh.

The consequence of this revelation was that something close to half of the Abbey building, and what a majority of the residential rooms, had to come “under the jackhammer!”

Very, very rarely has the fewness of vocations in recent years been anything other than a cause for sorrow. In the present circumstance, however, it is hard to imagine what could have been done if the monastery were occupied at anything approaching capacity! Pup tents in the back yard? Bunk beds along the hallways? The Abbey trailer park? The mind boggles.

What it has all shaken out to, is that, with some cells needed for storage, we end up with one extra room in the vast building, one room reserved for a possible guest. Mercifully — another odd exercise of Providence — we are at present not obliged to turn away friends of the community on this account, since the restrictions attendant upon the pandemic have meant that we can receive few guests at present.

Similarly, the lack of a congregation at Mass has meant that many of the pews in the church are at present adorned with books from our library. Given our druthers, we would have our friends there to join us at Mass! However, things being as they are, the present set-up allows a fair part of the library to be available for use, rather than boxed up or in some other manner inaccessible.

Much of February and March 2021, I spent relocating my treasurer’s office to a room conveniently located about a football field away. The three staircases that had to be negotiated added variety lacking on a flat gridiron. Carting material past Abbot Austin’s temporary office outside our Chapter Room, I have had abundant opportunity to hear his cheerful mantra, “Throw it away.” Resisting heroically all such siren songs, I finally transported all necessary items to my “temporary” office.

Many of the pews in the church are at present adorned with books from our library (page six).



Fr. James and (some of) his stuff.



Br. Kevin (left) and project manager Mark Camp inspect the new brick ledge for the HVAC units.



Gwen Sanborn, assistant to the abbot, at the concierge desk in the lobby. Office supplies, laundry, and mail boxes that have been moved to the wall behind her during this phase of renovations.

Of course, everything will have to move back later. But sufficient the challenge to the day thereof! In the meantime, I have to figure out how eventually to transport the contents of the undisclosed number of rooms housing our archives. Don’t tell the abbot, please.

To eat bread earned by hard toil—all this God gives to his beloved in sleep. — Psalm 127:2b

May 26, 2020,
Poimen lived in
Abbot Austin's
room.



Saving a Duckling

by Abbot Austin

fr. Becket asked me to write something about Poimen the Duck, in particular, what he meant to me. If you do not know the story of Poimen (pronounced POY-main), here is a summary first.

On May 3, 2020, during the initial outbreak of COVID-19, I rescued two ducklings from a storm water drain in our enclosed courtyard. The mother mallard had hatched out about seven ducklings, three of which fell into the drain soon after. The first was quickly returned to the mother, another took a long time to pull from the drain, and the third apparently drowned. By the time I pulled the second one out, the mother was no longer nearby and, even if I found the mother and returned the duckling, I was not sure whether the duckling would be accepted. So, I decided to raise the duckling myself. The day was Good Shepherd Sunday and, so, I named the duckling “Poimen,” the Greek word used in the New Testament for “shepherd.”

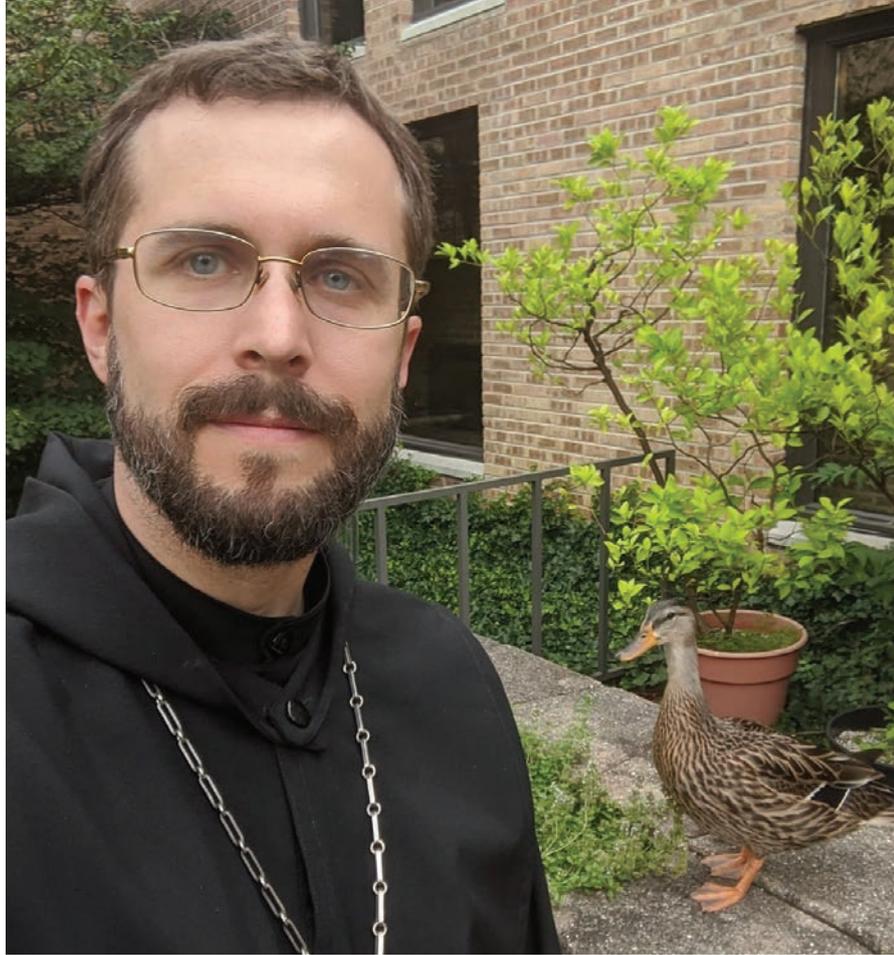
I kept Poimen in my own room at first, putting him near the heater and giving him a towel in which he could burrow, so as to keep warm. It took a couple of days before Poimen “imprinted” on me (thus identifying me as his mother) and, after that, the little duck would follow me anywhere I went, if I let him. So, if I went to my chair, he would come over to sit by my feet. Sometimes he would climb up my leg, on to my lap, and up to my shoulders, as I sat there. And if I let him out of my room, he would follow me down the hallways as I walked. When I would return to my room and

Poimen was in there, I had to be careful when I opened the door, since having heard me coming, he would be right by the door waiting, making that squeaky chirping noise that ducklings make. Also, as I walked around in my room, I had to be careful not to step on him, since he would run alongside my feet.

As the weeks went by, Poimen grew and grew, until eventually he could stay outside and live in our courtyard. In the courtyard, I put out a kiddie pool, a little house, and some duckling feed. Other monks would visit with him out there, for ducks are very social and he liked the company. Eventually, at about nine weeks old, he learned to fly. He would fly off but then come back, usually after a few minutes, sometimes after a day. But in late August, he flew off and did not return. He has been gone since. While it was sad not to have him around, the plan had always been to enable Poimen to return to his natural habitat and, so, it was good that this was achieved.

I have been referring to Poimen as a male and I cannot say that I am 100% sure that he was a male, for at first all mallards have the colors and markings of an adult female. But I am about 95% sure that Poimen is a male duck (also called a drake), given certain signs. One is that he was a very quiet duck who rarely quacked. Female ducks make more noise than the males and they quack in the way we associate with ducks. I only heard Poimen quack about a handful of times and those quacks were pretty weak.





The wonder of the natural world—God’s goodness overflows even from the smallest things in creation.

So, what did Poimen mean to me? I see him as a small but significant gift from God during a very stressful time. Poimen came right after the outbreak of the pandemic. The number of cases were rising and we were all adjusting to what seemed like a never-ending flood of important information. In taking care of Poimen, I had the chance to pause from all this by spending time with him and observing this fascinating little creature. I could see in this little animal God’s goodness reflected. Besides his beauty, I was regularly amazed at his natural instincts, such as how to eat, what to eat, how to swim, how to wash and groom his feathers, how to be on guard against aerial predators, and how to fly. I did not teach this duck these things and he never had a chance to learn them from his mother. Rather, they were inborn. This reflected the wonder of the natural world which God has created.

While I think that animals should be treated humanely, I do not equate them with human beings. They do not have the inherent dignity of a human person. But even in this small creature, one could see the goodness of God. That is, God’s goodness overflows even from the smallest things in creation. Poimen was a reminder of that amazing goodness of God that may be seen even in the smallest things, and that we can see, if we look, even in the midst of troubling times.

In short, Poimen was a comforting and reassuring gift for which I give glory to God. This gift was meant to be temporary, but it points to the goodness of God that remains forever.

Postscript | I wrote the preceding some months ago and, since then there has been a development. This is described below in a post from my Facebook page on May 16, 2021. The post was accompanied by videos of a male and a female mallard duck.

Happy Ascension of the Lord! These two ducks showed up yesterday. Is the female duck Poimen? It looks like Poimen. It is comfortable walking near me. It went into Poimen’s pool. And most interestingly, it came over and devoured scrambled eggs from a cup just as Poimen did. If this is Poimen, then it turned out to be female.

Time has confirmed that this duck is Poimen and that I had it wrong: Poimen is a female duck. In fact, Poimen went on to create a nest within our courtyard and hatch eleven ducklings, which are growing quickly.

Some have now called me a “grandpa,” given that I raised Poimen and that she is now raising ducklings of her own in our courtyard. I do not think of myself in that way, but the title fits a little, since it is less work tending to these ducklings than it was raising Poimen. Still, I provide some care for Poimen’s brood. Every day I bring them food, and sometimes even scrambled eggs, which they too love. Also, I regularly refill the kiddie pool with fresh water for them. These ducklings never imprinted on me, but they are gradually becoming more comfortable around me. And as I watch them grow, they also remind of God’s amazing goodness. Poimen and her brood grace the cover of this issue of *The Clerestory*.

So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. — Genesis 2:20





New abbey residents (from front to back), Regina, Droopy, and Lucy.

P.S. Hens in the House

by Abbot Austin

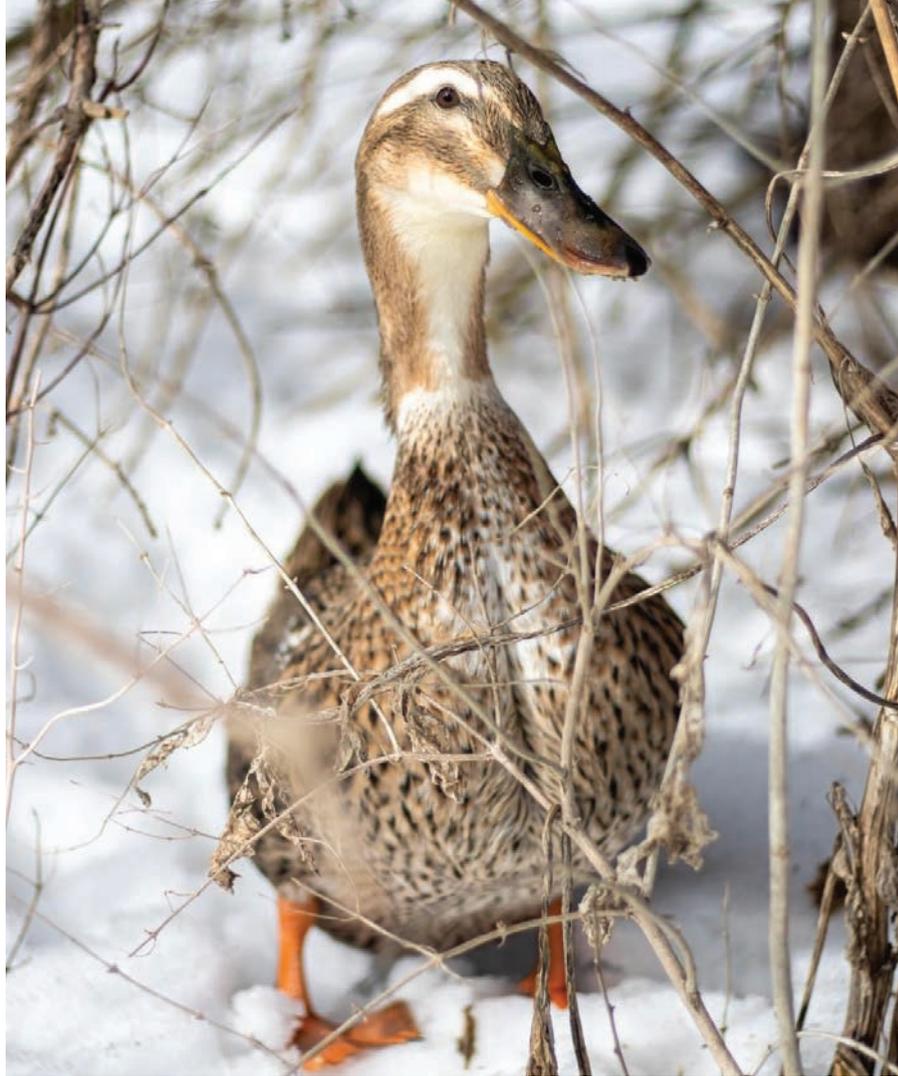
After raising Poimen, I acquired four farm ducks. Regina came from a homestead, and Droopy, Lucy, and Alia arrived from a farm in Steger, Illinois. Regina arrived first on August 22, the memorial of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She takes her name from the Latin for “queen.” The other ducks arrived later that day. Droopy’s wingtips drooped to the ground when she first arrived, and thus her name. Lucy has a very light colored face; so, I named her after the Latin word for “light.” As for Alia, I wasn’t sure what to name her; so, I called her Alia, “the other one,” also in Latin. Sad to say, Alia was attacked and killed by a very large red-tailed hawk.

Before acquiring ducks, I researched them and found that they are hardy birds with relatively low maintenance. They require lots of water for drinking and washing and must always be protected from predators, especially by being given safe quarters for the night. Yet, I do not recommend keeping them indoors, since they are very messy and smelly. For the nighttime, they have a small outdoor house that I built for them and that keeps predators, such as raccoons, out.



There are a few things that I like about raising ducks. One is that doing so takes me outside twice a day, where I can enjoy nature. I also enjoy that ducks are funny to watch and that they produce great tasting eggs. Ducks are very social and therefore it is preferable to have more than one duck at a time. While they of course quack, they also make many other sounds to communicate with each other. At the same time, ducks are skittish, so that they easily scare and do not like humans getting too close. They possess great eyesight and, with a sideways turn of their head, they can spot a hawk and even an airplane high in the sky. What most people do not know is that domesticated ducks are good egg layers. The eggs are larger and

Looking as regal as her name implies, Regina, winter 2021.



creamier, possessing more nutrients than chicken eggs. Like chickens, female ducks, that is, “hens,” lay eggs without the participation of the male, a.k.a., the “drake.” In the morning when I go out to release the ducks from their nighttime quarters and to prepare their food and water, I usually uncover three eggs under their bedding of pine shavings — one from each duck. We have used the duck eggs in the abbey kitchen to make a handful of things. The most popular thing made with them has probably been the homemade Italian-style chocolate pudding (*budino*).

While ducks require less care than many pets, they cannot be left unattended. That means, if I have to travel or attend meetings away from the abbey for a day, someone else needs to care for the ducks. Luckily, my executive assistant, Jeanine Jelinek, likes the ducks and she generously steps in to care for them when I cannot. Ducks are creatures of routine, and so are monks. So, it is nice when I get back to shepherding, in the quiet of our backyard, these “hens in the house.”

FOLLOW THE ADVENTURES of the abbot and Poimen (below)—*selfies with ducks, scrambled egg breakfasts, learning to swim, learning to fly, returning to the abbey*—and all the ducks at [facebook.com/austinosb](https://www.facebook.com/austinosb) (accessible to all with internet).



Continually serving others is a form of expressing our faith in and to God. — Hebrews 6:10

In Memoriam Monachorum

A lighted candle burned brightly in front of a standing crucifix at his place at table in the refectory. May he rest in peace!



**BR. RAPHAEL VACLAV
KOZEL, O.S.B.**

BORN
June 26, 1925

PROFESSED A MONK
December 8, 1955

DIED
January 29, 2020

THE ELDEST MEMBER OF OUR COMMUNITY AND THE LAST TO HAVE ENTERED THE MONASTERY AS A LAY BROTHER, Brother Raphael Kozel, died at St. Patrick's Residence, Naperville, Illinois, on the morning of January 29, 2020. Born into a large farming family in LaGrange, Texas, on June 26, 1925, Vaclav Kozel knew of St. Procopius Abbey from his early years, both through the publications of the Bohemian Benedictine Press and through the fact that his mother's brother, Fr. Charles Kolek, was a member of the monastery. Suffering from serious vision problems that would trouble him throughout his life, the young man advanced only so far as the sixth grade in the local schools before it was decided to send him to a school for the blind in Austin, Texas, where he spent two years. Vaclav then returned to work on the family farm. In 1950, he took up the profession of steeplejack, helping to build radio towers. By that time, his sister Annie had become a member of the Missionary Oblates of St. Scholastica in Lisle, and in 1951 she invited him to spend his vacation there. He would throughout the rest of his life quip, "And I'm still on vacation!" for he never returned to his former occupation. Instead, he was hired by Fr. Richard Shonka, the procurator of St. Procopius Abbey, to work in first the powerhouse and then the garage. Coming into contact with the lay brothers, he made application to join the monastic community, taking vows under the name of Br. Raphael on December 8, 1955. For a number of years, he was in charge of a large garden that supplied produce for the cannery operation run by Br. Anthony Hubka. From 1964-1967, Br. Raphael took part in an effort to establish a semi-contemplative monastery in Cedarburg, Wisconsin. Returning to St. Procopius, he was then assigned to the Bohemian Benedictine Press in Chicago, where, along with Br. Peter Pavlinak, he did much to keep the machinery operating during the Press' final years. Br. Raphael was in 1976 placed in charge of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning at Benet Academy. Notwithstanding his near blindness, for close to three decades "Brother Red" was involved at the school, even learning how to program various HVAC operations on the computer.

Ever more unsteady on his feet as he passed his eightieth birthday, it finally became necessary to remove him from the work at Benet, but he continued to contribute to the good of the community through his cheerfulness, his devotion to common exercises, and his assistance wherever possible. Some of his contributions included giving advice to his fellow monks on how to remedy physical ailments using the art of reflexology. Though he was always losing his hearing aids and complaining of a variety of allergies, when he could socialize with the community, he enjoyed a plate of bacon at Sunday breakfast, his mandatory two slices of rye bread with a bowl of hot barley at lunch and dinner, along with a drink of Bohemian beer, or a tall glass of "crushed orange," otherwise known as Orange Crush.

In 2016, decreasing mobility led to his admission to St. Patrick's Residence, where he spent his final years.

Three siblings preceded him in death: Sister Annie, Joe and Alois. Along with his monastic community, he is survived in life by six more siblings, Mary, Frances, Lillie, Beatrice, Albert, and John.

The Abbot and Monks received his body on Monday, February 3, 2020, at 7:00 p.m., at Vespers. The Community celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial on Tuesday, February 4, 2020, at 10:30 a.m., with interment in the abbey cemetery on the campus of Benedictine University.

Please remember Br. Raphael in your prayers.



That Last Monk That Prayed in the Dark

Reflection on the Life of Br. Raphael Vaclav Kozel, O.S.B.

by Abbot Dismas, O.S.B. | *The Vigil Service* | February 3, 2020

1955,

THAT'S THE YEAR BROTHER RAPHAEL AND I TOOK FIRST VOWS, I in June and he in December, so our commitments to the life of a monk differed by only six months. I became a priest-monk and he became a Brother.

Since his obituary includes all the basic information, I'll simply add a few details that should help grasp a bit more completely his life as a monk of this Abbey.

He was a Brother. Brothers always differed from the priests in that they were not ordained. In 1955, almost all were assigned to manual labor. That's how Br. Raphael began his monastic life.

In many respects the abbey functioned as a self-contained economy. The brothers' contributions to its two schools were primarily physical—such as installing chalk boards or making repairs. Most of them were farmers, growing all sorts of things both for immediate consumption and canning. We had cows for milk and steers for meat. Add the building maintenance, including the utilities, and there was enough work to keep all the brothers busy. At one time or another Raphael found himself working in each area—farming, gardening, janitorial, waste management, heating and electricity, with gardening becoming a major duty and later, both heating and electricity. He worked many years in the garden, but spent most of his life at the powerhouse of our academy.

For someone who could not see very well, his work was remarkable. He came to the powerhouse as an assistant to the long-time manager with responsibilities for maintaining the entire heating system and things related. He was given full responsibility when the manager retired and was outstanding when a large diesel engine was installed to generate enough electricity for the entire academy when Commonwealth Edison would cut off electric power to the Academy in times of extremely high demand. He had to stand on a rubber mat to throw the large switch that moved the power to the diesel engine, and back to the company when the demand returned to normal. Eventually, the whole system was computerized, so everything took place without his manual help, but in those early years the Academy saved thousands of dollars in fees when the electric company was able to cut off Benet for the better part of a day. Benet still saves fees and, of most importance, Benet is still independent, still able to keep

everything functioning, regardless of what's happening to the electricity anywhere else in the area. Br. Raphael made a great contribution, and those who followed him have strengthened the system, developing everything as needed.

I tell you that because this brother monk who could not see well made a major difference. As interesting as that is, I prefer to talk about the holiness he displayed as a monk.

Shortly after I was discharged from the Air Force, I was advised to consider St. Procopius College to continue my education. Fr. Denis Svec, a monk of the abbey, was showing me around and when we entered the student chapel we found it deeply dark, lit only by the sanctuary lamp. When my eyes adjusted, I was able to see many monks praying, and I immediately said to myself, "After so many years in the military, I need a place like this." I returned the next morning to become a student. Those praying monks became my grace. I eventually came to realize that they were all brothers who came to pray after the evening meal. In time, I added all the other holy monks to that image, brothers and priests; Raphael was one of the first. Before I completed my sophomore year, I decided to become a monk with the express purpose to live with holy people who would help me become holy.

Eventually, we closed the farm and included the brothers in our regular life; they were no longer separate; Raphael became a choir monk as he continued his work at the academy.

We become like our friends. That's an old saying, today expressed in a variety of ways. Raphael, an early deep friend with those holy monks, became like them, dedicated to a life in Christ, captured in his prayer life, both alone and in community; in the honesty of all his dealings, in the truthfulness of what he said, in his friendliness to all, in his ongoing development of competence to meet his responsibilities, in his helpfulness to all who needed his help, in his forgiveness to those who needed his forgiveness.

I recalled all those old monks with purpose, first, because they were for me the model of a monastic life in community and second, because Raphael was the last member of the original group that prayed in the dark, the only one left who lived and worked with the originals whose holiness first beckoned me; for me, his death marked the end of an era. I pray now with confidence that he will soon know the fullness of life in Christ.

...And let perpetual light shine upon them.



In Memoriam Monachorum

A lighted candle burned brightly in front of a standing crucifix
at his place at table in the refectory. May he rest in peace!

REV. JUDE D. RANDALL, O.S.B.

BORN | October 4, 1933

PROFESSED A MONK | June 27, 1954

ORDAINED A PRIEST | May 28, 1960

DIED | January 9, 2021



FR. JUDE WAS BORN IN DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS, ON OCTOBER 4, 1933, to the late Joseph and Teresa Randall. David Randall attended the grade school of St. Joseph Parish and then came to St. Procopius Academy in 1947. Given the monastic name of Jude, he entered the monastic novitiate following his sophomore year at St. Procopius College and professed his monastic vows on June 27, 1954. After his theological studies at St. Procopius Seminary, Fr. Jude was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Martin McNamara at St. Raymond Nonnatus Cathedral, Joliet, on May 28, 1960. He spent some years as teacher and bookstore manager of the Academy, and assistant business manager of the Abbey, serving as the last “farm boss” while that monastic enterprise wound down in the course of the 1960s. In 1964, Fr. Jude agreed to the request of Abbot Daniel Kucera that he become the Abbey’s infirmarian, and for the next twenty-eight years he was most conscientious and solicitous in looking after the needs of ailing confreres. Fr. Jude succeeded his novitiate classmate, Fr. Ronald Rigovsky, as President of Benet Academy in 1992. In that position, he spearheaded the three capital campaigns that made possible the construction of St. Ronald Gymnasium, St. Daniel Theater, and St. Jude Hall, which modernized the school’s science and cafeteria facilities. With his faithful sidekick, Benny, a Golden Labrador Retriever, he was a constant presence at Benet events until his retirement in 2012. Up to the year 2012, Fr. Jude relished assisting on weekends at numerous parishes in the Joliet Diocese. Among them were St. Raphael’s, St. Mary of Gostyn, his home parish of St. Joseph in Downers Grove, and Visitation. Fr. Jude’s health and mobility declined over the next few years, and in December 2016, he entered St. Patrick’s Residence in Naperville where he died on January 9, 2021. Fr. Jude is survived by his monastic community, his sister, Sister Dorothy Randall, C.S.J., of LaGrange, Illinois, and his beloved Miller cousins.

On the evening of Monday, January 11, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., the Abbot and Community received his body and processed to the Abbey Church where we kept vigil. The monks celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial on Tuesday, January 12, 2021, at 10:30 a.m., and proceeded to the abbey cemetery on the grounds of Benedictine University.

Please remember Fr. Jude in your prayers.

ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AFTER FR. JUDE’S QUIET PASSING on the morning of Saturday, January 9, adulations began to pour in on social media. Many of you alums wrote things such as, “He was awesome when I was there.” “My thoughts are with him with Benny at his side.” “He did a great job for music and the performing arts.”

Faculty even commented. Mr. Kevin Helmick of the Math Department said, “Fr. Jude was more than President of Benet Academy for my first seventeen years of teaching. He was a great friend and could always make me smile...if I didn’t say it enough, Jude, (to steal your line) my day was always much better once I saw YOU, too...perhaps the most beautiful gift was Father Jude concelebrating both my father’s and mother’s funeral masses. I love you, Father Jude, and will never forget you ... God bless you!”

Then there are the music professors of St. Daniel Hall. Choral Director Brian Wand wrote, “Fr. Jude, former President of Benet Academy, a good friend, mentor, and tremendous supporter of the Arts has passed away. May flights of Angels sing him to his rest!” Brian’s friend and builder of St. Daniel Hall, Dr. Ryan Hourigan now at Ball State University in Indiana called him “one of his best friends and mentors.”

May his soul and all the souls of the faithful departed...



We Are Always On Call: In Memory of a Mentor

Reflection on the Life of Father Jude D. Randall, O.S.B.

by Fr. Becket | *The Vigil Service* | January 11, 2021

Mentor is a word I would use to describe Fr. Jude. I am the Infirmarian at the abbey because of him. Just the other day in the office, I needed to document his family history and Social Security number for the funeral home. I thought to myself, “Long time ago, Fr. Jude composed these cards for the monks.” Just yesterday, I reminded Brian Powell that Fr. Jude hired him more than fifty years ago to be our funeral director.

As a young monk, many years ago, I stood in amazement at the numbers of monks Fr. Jude cared for on two floors of the infirmary along with our first nurse, Mrs. Mary Ciesielski. Of course, as the years wore on, the infirmary staff received assistance from many novices and junior monks. This is how I started my time here in the infirmary. Fr. Jude taught me one thing: We are always on call. Occasionally, a monk will mention a health problem at table or make a suggestion, and I respond, “I’m off-duty.” However, I know that is not true. Our second nurse, Sheri Young, and now our third nurse, Megan McCatty, and I know that we are always on call. Even when Fr. Jude became president of Benet Academy, Fr. Jude remained on call for me. To illustrate — early one morning at 3:00 a.m., I woke up with someone banging on my door in the infirmary. Snapping to an upright position, I yelled out, “Just a minute.” Fr. Mel surprised me at the opened door with a noise I can still hear today—he was wheezing and developing congestive heart failure fast. I sat him down, and, guess what I did next. I called Fr. Jude. He remained with Fr. Mel until we got emergency assistance. At his best, Fr. Jude demonstrated interpersonal generosity, and a caring spirit. He was also his best at Benet auctions performing the role of host, par excellence, as the second president of Benet Academy.

Nevertheless, like all of us, Fr. Jude was a flawed character. Often, I found myself at the end of his Sicilian temper. We did not agree on many things while at Benet Academy. Our opinions differed greatly on the scope of campus ministry and the renovation of the Chapel of St. Therese, the Little Flower. What was important for me was to focus on what mattered, spiritually and professionally: stick to the vision and show respect even when negated. I needed to remember also that I was on call for myself.

Matters softened between us when I resumed the job of Infirmarian for the second time. At the end of the calendar year of 2016, it became clear that he needed more medical and personal assistance. I sat down with him in his room and told him that we were unable to care for him. I swallowed hard and braced myself for what was to follow. Fr. Jude looked at me briefly and put his head down. For the first time since simple vows, he became again what first attracted me to him, gentle, working to accept the state of his life.

Brothers and Sisters, we Christians are always on call. When we immerse ourselves into the Christian Call, whether we like it or not, we can still find hope. In the words of St. Paul, “Hope does not disappoint...even in our sins; God still grants us the gifts of redemption and reconciliation.” Whether in the middle of the night or in the midst of one’s own personal pain, answering the call of servitude is to fall into the good ground of Christ where we die to self.

To conclude, I must mention again, how much Ryan Hourigan and Brian Wand love Fr. Jude, as well as many of the alumni and alumnae whose weddings he officiated at in life. Today, Ryan ended his email to me with, “I will miss him terribly.” To Brian Wand, Fr. Jude “was a tremendous advocate for students in the arts.” He adds,

“After our fall concert in 2009, he told me that he would like the choir to sing a song we had performed that night at his funeral. Though I’m sad that circumstances keep us from honoring him in person, the text speaks to the way he worked for the students of Benet Academy.” The song is entitled, “Blow Ye the Trumpet,” and the funny thing is, Fr. Jude could never keep a tune. In fact, he was tone deaf.

Blow ye the trumpet,
Sweet is Thy work,
my God, my King.
I’ll praise my Maker
with all my breath.
O happy is the man who hears.
Why should we start,
and fear to die,
with songs and
honors sounding loud.
Ah, lovely appearance of death.

Our brother, Fr. Jude, was:
87 years old
66 years a professed Benedictine Monk
60 years a Catholic priest
20 years the second president
of Benet Academy.

Sister Dorothy, on behalf of the abbot and monks, please accept our deepest condolences. Thank you for your resilient care for your brother, here at the abbey and at St. Patrick’s Residence. In addition, I want to thank deeply the staff and the Carmelite Sisters of St. Patrick’s Residence, Sisters Anthony, Kathleen, Raphael, and Mary Elizabeth for their daily care of our brother. It was a long four years and nine days ending in a pandemic. In the last few months, Fr. Jude gave us hints that it was time to return to the Lord.

So, let us pray: Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord. And, let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace! Amen! May all the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.





The Oblate Corner

by Fr. James

Since I joined the Abbey in 1974, only two monks have had the position of Oblate Director. First, Fr. David; then, Fr. Christian; and after him, Fr. David again. And so, when Abbot Austin asked me to assume the responsibility, I was struck by this remarkable example of monastic stability.

I look forward to continuing the good work of my predecessors, as well as that of Fr. Julian, who has been assisting Fr. David for some years now. My thanks go to these my confreres and to all the Oblates who have contributed in diverse ways to our common effort to live in the spirit of St. Benedict. I ask your prayers for the future development of the program.

In the immediate future, because of the construction that is going to have large portions of the monastery building inaccessible during the year ahead, I am not sure yet when we will be able to resume monthly meetings. In the meantime, I'd like to mention several other possibilities for spiritual enrichment.

Both Abbot Austin and I have Public Figure pages on Facebook that are accessible to anyone on the internet. Just type in our names ("Abbot Austin G. Murphy O.S.B.," "Fr. James Flint O.S.B."). As well as sermons, we publish various thoughts and commentary on life at the Abbey. The Abbot's page also includes occasional *lectio* commentary on one or the other Mass readings.

In addition to Facebook, I also publish a weekly newsletter. Anyone interested in subscribing can contact me at jflint@procopius.org. This address can also be used for other questions or comments.

Vocations by Br. Guy

With more than a year's worth of virus and world uncertainty, and with bricks, pipes, and monks spreading around the Abbey, I again have become vocation director, taking over for Fr. James. It's truly an honor for me to serve.

I want you to know of my prayers for all discerning a vocation, as well as those who support and encourage the discerners. Know, too, that while the construction spoken of in this issue continues, and will for some time, we will eventually and happily open up and have more than one room available for vocation guests — even group retreats. While being limited now, know that you are still invited to call, email, write, zoom, or perhaps, visit. I'd be delighted to spend some time with you. gjelinek@procopius.org



Abbey Adventures

Chronicling our great venture of Christian discipleship

■ July 19, 2021 (above), St. Procopius Abbey holds its first public Mass since the Covid-19 shutdown.



2021 Jubilarians

70 YEARS OF MONASTIC PROFESSION

Fr. Kenneth (above, left)

60 YEARS OF ORDINATION

Abbot Dismas

2020 Jubilarians

65 YEARS OF MONASTIC PROFESSION

Abbot Dismas

60 YEARS OF ORDINATION

Fr. Jude

60 YEARS OF MONASTIC PROFESSION

Fr. Anthony

50 YEARS OF MONASTIC PROFESSION

Fr. Joseph

Fr. Thomas

Fr. Julian

■ For the first time since the beginning of COVID-19, the monks entertained more than five guests. Celebrating the first Vespers of St. Procopius on July 3, 2021, the monks welcomed nine sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery for prayers and a festive meal.



Above, **Fr. Becket** with Sisters Celestine (left) and Hyacintha who are from Namibia and studying at Benedictine University.

■ **Abbot Austin** published an article in the *American Benedictine Review* (72:2 June 2021) entitled, "Structures in the Spiritual Life."

■ This summer, as usual, **Abbot Hugh** works daily in the abbey garden. Already at table we have enjoyed leaf lettuce, green onions, beets and beet greens, zucchini, green beans, and asparagus. He and his friend, Randy Scheib, planted thirty-three tomato plants and a row of squash. How the monks love tomatoes!



FEEDBACK

From the Advancement Office:

We would like to update our records. Please respond if applicable.

- I am receiving duplicate copies of *The Clerestory*.
- My name and/or address are incorrect on the mailing label. *Please make corrections to the mailing label on the other side of this form and we will update your information.*
- I would like to make a voluntary subscription to *The Clerestory*. *If you wish to help defray the costs of producing and mailing the magazine, you may enclose a tax deductible contribution, payable to St. Procopius Abbey.*
- I wish to be removed from your mailing list.

Please tear off this form and return it in the enclosed envelope. Your responses are appreciated. Thank you.

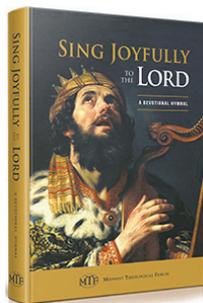
■ In May 2021, **Abbot Austin** published the article, “‘Idle’ Worship: Religious Structures and the Redemption of Time During Pandemic,” at adoremus.org. Read it at adoremus.org/author/amurphy/.

■ Our confrere, **Fr. David**, now resides at St. Patrick’s Residence, 14400 Brookdale Rd., Naperville, IL 60563.



■ In Spring 2021, the Abbey began expanding its outreach via email communications. New emails were created that come out at set intervals (e.g. *Lectio Divina* are emailed twice a week, homilies and sermons are sent once a week, Abbey News Updates are sent once a month). In addition, shorter topic-specific email series have been started. First was a Lenten *Lectio Divina* series. Next came a series that reviewed the Second Vatican Council’s document, *Lumen Gentium: The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*. The next short series will focus on Abbot Austin’s development of the Structured Life Movement. If you’re interested in subscribing to any of these communications, sign up at bit.ly/SPA-subscribe or contact Matt Mountin at media@procopius.org.

■ **Br. Augustine** was one of the music consultants for *Sing Joyfully to the Lord: A Devotional Hymnal* by the Midwest Theological Forum. This revised edition contains 168 Hymns & Chants along with artwork and a devotional text for each Hymn & Chant. The hymnal contains a section with Mass Ordinaries, also known as the sung/written parts of the Mass. Presently, he is working with fellow consultants on the organ accompaniment edition.



■ In 2020, **Fr. Philip** published, “How Christians Have Used the Psalms for Prayer and Meditation,” *The American Benedictine Review* 71:2(2020), 198-216.

■ In May, 2020, **Br. Gregory** completed and successfully defended his dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Rice University, Houston, Texas. It is entitled, “Open Secret: Henry Corbin, Elliot Wolfson, and the Mystical Poetics of Deification.”



■ After twenty-two years as the abbey nurse in the abbey infirmary, Sheryl “Sheri” Young (below, left) retired. Replacing Mary Ciesielski in 1997, Sheri computerized and streamlined much of the infirmary operations and brought it into the twenty-first century. Having worked closely with two infirmarians, **Fr. Becket and Br. Gregory**, Sheri improved our medical relationships with Edward-Elmhurst Health and DuPage Medical Group and engaged the abbey house doctor, Dr. Glen Coulomb, whenever a medical need arose. At the end of April 2020, the monks invited Sheri to a luncheon in her honor. Sheri and her husband



Jeff sold their home in Naperville and moved to the Northwoods of Wisconsin. Fr. Becket and Committee chose **Megan Gallagher McCatty, R.N., A.P.N.** (pictured with Sheri), as the abbey’s new nurse. A graduate of Benet Academy, Megan is married to Matt and has two boys, Jack and Hughie. They live in Naperville.

■ In March, 2020, **Abbot Austin** preached a retreat at the Trappist abbey of New Melleray, Dubuque, Iowa. newmelleray.org/Retreat-With-Abbot-Austin-Murphy-OSB.

■ Ducks are not the first Abbey critters. A generation of Benet students will fondly remember **Fr. Jude’s** faithful companion, Benny, gifted at a school auction.



Abbey Prayer & Worship

Masses in the Church at St. Procopius Abbey are once again open to the public.

Individuals attending Mass are required to wear masks unless they have been vaccinated for COVID-19. There will be a section for those wishing to observe social distancing.

Renovations are ongoing, so please follow any instructions posted on signs.

We look forward to welcoming you back to the Abbey.

The Conventual Mass

Monday-Friday.....4:50 p.m.
 Saturday.....7:00 a.m.
 Sunday.....11:00 a.m.



Living a balanced life is something Benedictines strive for.



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- 2 You Are In Our Prayers
- 6 Rome Was Not
Demolished In A Day
- 8 Saving a Duckling
- 10 Hens in the House
- 12 In Memoriam: Br. Raphael
- 14 In Memoriam: Fr. Jude
- 16 The Oblate Corner
Abbey Adventures

THE
CLERE STORY