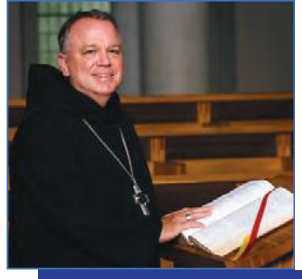


Here at the Abbey, we are aware that many of you among our alumni, oblates, benefactors, and friends have been affected by the devastation of Hurricane Ida with catastrophic damage to many homes and businesses. While we were spared major damage at the Abbey, there was a moment when we feared another possible flood. We have been mindful of and are praying for all who are suffering and working to rebuild in the aftermath of the storm.



Abbot Justin Brown, O.S.B.

While hurricanes and natural disasters are never good things in and of themselves, they provide an opportunity for what is best in the human spirit to manifest itself in the faith and resilience of those affected and the generosity and selflessness of those who come to their aid, making sacrifices out of love for their neighbor.

Recently I read an article written in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky. The article noted that in his famous novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, the author views salvation not only as Christ's offering redemption for all, but also our response to Christ's work as fellow workers laboring in active love with all we encounter, especially those in need. Once again, with Hurricane Ida as with other disasters that leave behind people in need, Christ's work of redemption is being carried out by those laboring in love.

In this year of Saint Joseph let us invoke his intercession for all in need in south Louisiana who must rebuild their homes and communities following the storms of these last two years. We at the Abbey who have known his special intercession join our prayers with yours.

*+ Justin Brown O.S.B.*



Cover image: This statue of Saint Joseph was brought with the Benedictine Monks from Germany and erected at the original settlement in Gessen, LA, in honor of Saint Joseph who answered their prayers to find suitable drinking water. Today it stands in the fountain in Christ Court at the Seminary College. This statue is the only remnant from the original monastery which was lost in a fire.

For up-to-date information about SAINT JOSEPH ABBEY AND SEMINARY COLLEGE please visit our website at:

[saintjosephabbey.com](http://saintjosephabbey.com)

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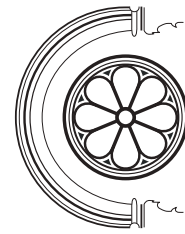
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Scan this QR code to see additional photos from this issue of Abbey Voice.



SAINT JOSEPH ABBEY + SEMINARY COLLEGE

## Giving Opportunities

Your financial support is greatly appreciated.  
Donations can be made online at:

[www.saintjosephabbey.com/donate](http://www.saintjosephabbey.com/donate)  
or by mail at:

Saint Joseph Abbey and Seminary College  
Department of Institutional Advancement  
75376 River Road

Saint Benedict, LA 70457  
For information, call: (985) 867-2264  
or e-mail [ddenoux@sjasc.edu](mailto:ddenoux@sjasc.edu)



Your gift of time and talent is also welcomed.  
Please consider joining our Volunteer Program.

For more information, please contact:  
Carmen Brisolaro at (985) 867-2226 or [volunteersandevents@sjasc.edu](mailto:volunteersandevents@sjasc.edu)



You can also make a donation  
by scanning this QR code  
with your phone.

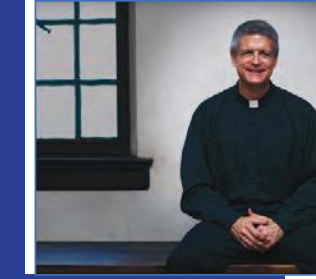
## THE ABBEY VOICE

Volume 45: Fall 2021

SAINT JOSEPH ABBEY  
AND SEMINARY COLLEGE  
75376 River Road  
Saint Benedict, LA 70457



## RECTOR'S LETTER



President-Rector  
Gregory Boquet, O.S.B.

In James 1:2-4, as the author addresses the early Catholic Church, he says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance." As we began our fall semester, this verse resonated with all of us who have endured the conditions of COVID and hurricanes which have marked the past several semesters. We look forward to the spiritual growth that occurs through the experience of these circumstances and the strengthening of our faith.

This semester, we welcomed 53 new seminarians to our campus on August 11th in a somewhat normal manner, given the still-present COVID pandemic. As they each

arrived with family members, we were excited to have the opportunity to share our seminary with them for the day. Our returning men joined the community on August 16th, giving us a total of 112 seminarians.

Since their arrival, our seminarians have been engaged in academics and formation. The seniors are off to a good start with in-person education providing the environment that is most conducive to learning and growing in Christ. The seniors were eager to lead "Formation Weekend" which took place on September 10-12. All 29 of our seniors worked diligently to provide the underclassmen with a weekend of informative formation talks, engaging activities, and much opportunity for community prayer. The weekend was very well-received by all who participated! The entire community looks forward to many more moments to connect with their brother seminarians as we progress through the semester.

The seminary continues to be blessed by many who have given to our mission, even in difficult times. Because of your generosity, our physical plant was able to move forward with renovations to Savio dormitory and Benet Hall, our auditorium. I am grateful for the support we receive as a seminary college and the opportunity it affords us in the education and formation of our next generation of priests who will serve the Church.

I continue to be humbled by the resiliency of our young men and how they've responded to the trials that have been laid before them and our entire nation over the past couple of years. I am amazed by their accomplishments, both personally and as a community. I pray that, as this year progresses, we face both our challenges and blessings with gratitude, flexibility, and a teachable spirit. May we remember the verse shared by James with those he ministered to, "Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him" (James 1:12).

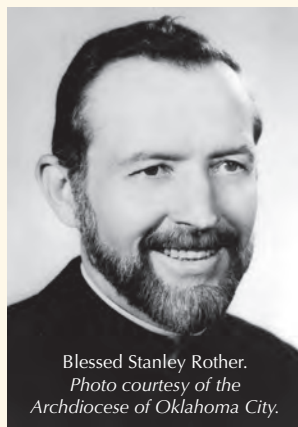
*V. Rev. Gregory M. Boquet, O.S.B.*

## SEMINARY SETS THE BAR FOR ENROLLMENT



The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) recently released its seminary enrollment study. Of the 11 free-standing seminary colleges in the country, Saint Joseph Seminary College has the largest enrollment by far, with 112 seminarians.

## SEMINARIANS VENERATE LIFE OF BLESSED STANLEY ROTHER



Blessed Stanley Rother. Photo courtesy of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

This past Easter break, seniors from Saint Joseph Seminary College made a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Blessed Stanley Rother in Oklahoma City. In July 1981, Rother, a diocesan priest of OKC, was shot to death by guerrillas in the rectory of his mission church in Santiago, Guatemala. In 2015, the Vatican formally recognized Fr. Rother as a martyr and beatified him in 2017, the final stage before canonization as a saint.

The seminarians on pilgrimage were accompanied by Fr. Sam Fontana, Dean of Students, and Joe Bass, Director of Apostolic Formation.

In addition to venerating the life and memory of Fr. Rother, one of the purposes of the trip was to introduce the men to what missionary discipleship looks like when lived to its fullest potential in the diocesan priesthood.

“We emphasized the role of spiritual fatherhood, which is a central theme in a man’s senior year,” Fr. Sam said.

The students also took a tour of the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine, still under construction. The shrine will include a church, ministry facilities, and the Blessed Stanley Rother Pilgrim Center and Museum.



Seminarians gather in front of the shrine, still under construction.



Vestments of Rother on display in the museum

## SAVIO HALL RENOVATION BEGINS



The dorm rooms in Savio Hall will be similar to the artist’s rendering and photos here.

Interior demolition of Savio Hall (the old library) began after Labor Day. The work is in preparation of a renovation that will return the building to its original use as a much-needed residence hall for 1/3 of the seminarians, who regrettably, are still being housed in temporary trailers more than five years after the March 2016 Flood. The much-anticipated reopening is scheduled for fall 2022.

This project was made possible by the generous contributions to the Seminary’s 2021 Saint Joseph Appeal.

The funds will help purchase furnishings for the dorm rooms — beds, desks, chest of drawers, closets, and bathroom vanities. Over the past five years, we have come so far! It is now time to give all of our students a permanent home.

# Abbey and Seminary News

## BROTHER LAZARUS AND BROTHER IGNATIUS TAKE FIRST VOWS



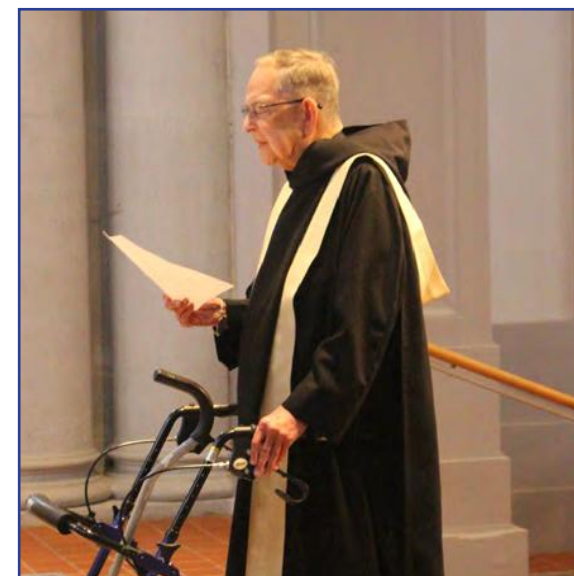
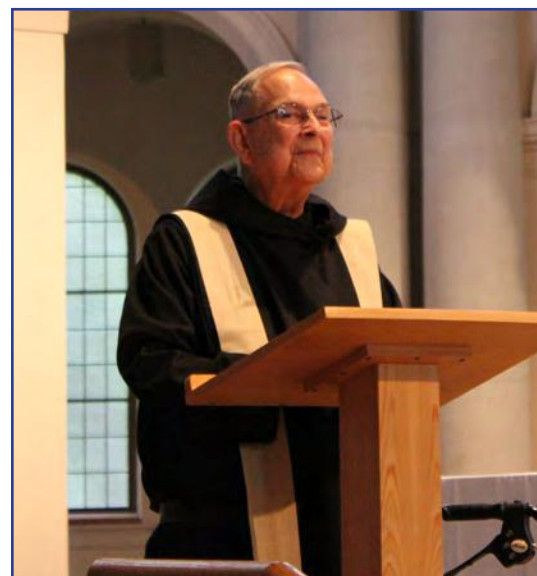
During Vespers in the Abbey Church on September 14, the Feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross, novices Phillip (pictured on the left) and Martin took their first monastic vows. Phillip was given the name Lazarus and will now be known as Brother Lazarus Gordy. Martin was given the name Ignatius and will now be known as Brother Ignatius Krecker.

Brother Lazarus was raised in St. Francisville, LA, and attended Catholic High School in Baton Rouge. After graduating in 2010, he attended Saint Joseph Seminary College and later the Institute for Priestly Formation in Omaha, NE. Prior to returning to the Abbey in 2020, he served as a wilderness camp counselor at Camp Chosatonga as well as facilities manager for a church in Greenville, SC.

Brother Ignatius was born in Mobile, AL, and grew up in Chattanooga, TN. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature from Southern Illinois University. Following graduation, he moved to Ocean Springs, MS, to be near family. Prior to joining the Abbey, he worked in the restaurant and retail industry and taught fifth-grade English and social studies.

Brother Lazarus and Brother Ignatius will take final vows in three years. Congratulations to both men on this monumental step in their journey here at Saint Joseph Abbey.

## FR. SCOTT UNDERWOOD CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF MONASTICISM



Friends (and Gift Shop volunteers!) and family of Fr. Scott Underwood, O.S.B., joined the monastic community May 28th to celebrate his 50-year monastic jubilee during Mass in the Abbey Church. **Congratulations Fr. Scott!**

## VOLUNTEER BRINGS HIS ENGINEERING GIFTS TO ABBEY



When Al Gahn graduated from St. Paul’s High School at a Mass held at the Abbey Church in the late 70s, never would he have imagined that more than 40 years later, he’d still be driving past the very same church two days a week.

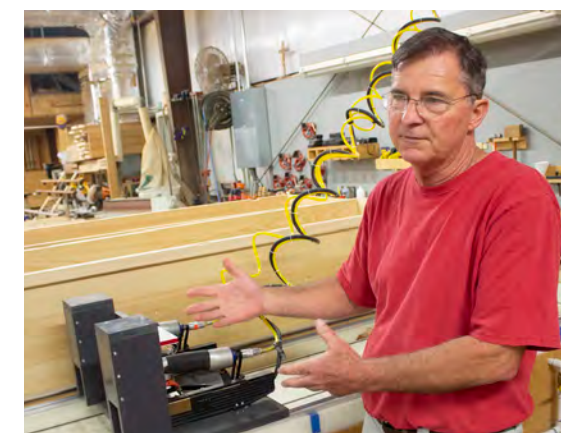
Al’s second introduction to the Abbey came roughly seven years ago. His father was a woodworker, as well as a founding member of the St. Tammany Woodworkers Guild. Al accompanied his father to some of these meetings, including one at the Abbey, where he learned about the casket-making operation. After the meeting, Saint Joseph Abbey Caskets volunteer Joe Perret invited Al to come back and try his hand at volunteering.

“On one of my first days as a volunteer, I started to operate the big table saw to cut long pieces of wood. Jeff Horchoff, a Caskets volunteer, said, ‘No, you’re not quite ready for that,’” Al said, laughing at the memory.

Nevertheless, Al was hooked. From that point on, his duties evolved.

Thirty-one years with Gulf States Utilities (now Entergy) as an engineer would help cement Al’s distinct place as a “project coordinator” with Saint Joseph Abbey Caskets.

Al helped install the first CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machine for Abbey Caskets shortly after arriving. The CNC machine accepts computer programs and instructions to cut specific pieces of wood. Most of Al’s time now is spent improving the workflow in Abbey Caskets, including moving equipment, improving dust collection, and developing electrical and installation plans.



“The best things I have done here were the ideas of others, not just my ideas. I use my engineering background to help change the processes in Abbey Caskets, which make the workflow more efficient,” Al said.

“I go home and think about it and can’t wait to get here the next morning. It’s the nature of what I like to do.”

It’s apparent the technical side of Al’s volunteer work keeps him satisfied, but he also sees Abbey Caskets as a home away from home.

“The folks who work here, including Deacon Mark Coudrain (Abbey Caskets Director), Rene Coil, and Joe Jarrell, are fun to work with. It’s not like working for a big company. It’s not stressful, and there aren’t any deadlines. Mark creates a nice working environment for everyone. It’s wonderful to be part of that while giving back to the Abbey,” Al said.

Blessings to you, Al, for your generosity!

## ABBOT JUSTIN BLESSES CASKETS EXPANSION

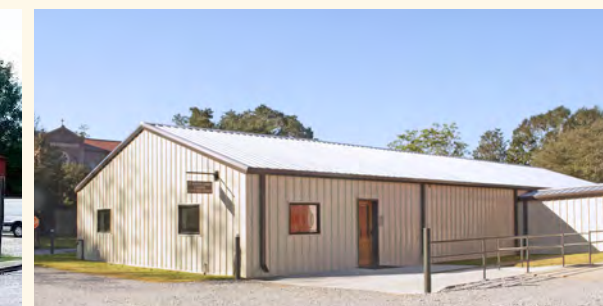
On March 19th, the Feast of St. Joseph, the monastic community joined Abbot Justin Brown and Saint Joseph Abbey Caskets Director Deacon Mark Coudrain for the blessing of the new Caskets building expansion. The build-out re-purposed the old Maur Hall, which originally served as a seminary dorm prior to 1960, and then as the maintenance building next to the Caskets workshop.



Abbot Justin Brown and Fr. Jude Israel bless the new Saint Joseph Abbey Caskets expansion.

With this addition, Saint Joseph Abbey Caskets is now able to produce an extra 15 caskets per month, as well as make new mahogany caskets available to the public. The additional income from increased casket production enables the Abbey to offset the rising costs of healthcare for its elderly monks, the mounting fees for educating younger monks, and the increased expenses of running apostolates such as the Seminary College and Retreat Center.

More space is also available to house new equipment, store the increased supply of finished caskets, and provide an appropriate area for the public to view the caskets. Funds generously raised during the Abbey’s 2019 Christmas Appeal made this vital project possible.



On the left, work begins on the former Maur Hall and the expansion was completed earlier this year.

## NECROLOGY

Please Help Us Pray For Family and Friends Who Have Passed on into Eternal Life

BLAIZE J. BACAS '15	RUSSELL FRANCIS HENDRICK	WILLIAM J. POWERS, JR.
THOMAS A. BENIGNO	GEOFFREY CHOATE HINGLE	LOUIS SEBASTIAN PREJEAN, JR.
LEWARD JOSEPH BOQUET '50	MSGR. ROBERT C. HILL '60	SIDNEY NOEL RIDEAU
TOMMY L. BOUDREAUX	ALICE MARGUERITE "PEGGY" MEYER HORCHOFF	OTHELIA MARIE MENARD SCHOEN
REV. RONALD J. BRAUD '59	DIETER MAX HUGEL	JOSEPH O. SCHWARTZ, III
VIRGINIA B. BRODY	HARRY R. HULL, JR. '57	THOMAS (AL) A. SHERLOCK, SR.
KENNETH PAUL BROUSSARD	ALAN THOMAS JACOBI	ROBERT L. SIMPSON
MARK P. BURTON '72	CHARLES H. JEANFREAU '46	ROBERT "BOB" SIMPSON
DENNIS E. CALKINS	LYNDA MAYER JEANSONNE	MICHAEL KEVIN SPRINGMANN
CAPT. IRWIN "VENU" CALLAIS	LYNN LANDRY KERNION	REV. RYAN ANDREW STAWAISZ '14
PATRICK CANCEINNE, SR.	FRANCIS B. LARRIVIERE '47	LEVI JOSEPH THOMPSON, JR. '51
PETER CARUSO	LOIS LeBLANC	REV. JOSEPH C. TRANCHINA, JR. '62
LINA KATE COYNE CAVELL	REV. MSGR. DONALD L. LEDET '57	SUE TURNER
NELSON "PHILIP" CONSTANT '58	BRIAN P. LOGARBO, SR.	MARILYN RUIZ TUSSON
JOSEPH DeSALVO, II	REV. MSGR. JOSEPH ANTHONY LUMINAIS '48	LYNDA HOFFSTADT WALKER
CECILIA CAROLYN BODET DEYNOODT	LEWIS MARSHALL '83	ANNA KATHY MCGLOTHLIN WELCH
URSULA "SUE" FINEGAN	DEACON GERALD J. MARTINEZ '63	CHRISTOPHER J. WHITE
HILDA MARGARITA FLETCHER	DONALD JAMES MASHBURN	MARY LOU JOHNSON PLAISANCE WILKERSON
HENRY A. GARON	LINDA MARIE DELCAMBRE MATTINGLY	REV. KENNETH ANTHONY WILLIAMS '57
JOSEPH C. GIGLIO, SR.	PETER NASTASI, JR.	HARRY STAFFORD WILLIAMS
CHARLES JOSEPH GIROIR, SR. '62	WAYNE LOUIS PARENT '62	ANN HEBERT WOLF
JOHN O. GRANT, III '54	EDWARD J. PICOU, JR.	ARLENE WOLF
LAWRENCE J. HABETZ '50		KATHERINE SCHWAB YEARGAIN