

In the Beginning - Father Gerard Kirsch, O.S.B.

The summer of 1956 found **Prior James Piotrkowski (1897-1974)** and **Father Pascal Merola (1902-1977)** doing repair work at Lambert Lodge, the abbey's recreation property on Eld Inlet... On July 20, the loan agreement for the new dormitory (the future Baran Hall) was received, allowing construction to begin. On July 23, clearing of the site for the new dormitory was begun by **Father Gregory Wall (1894-1979)** and **Father Pascal**. On July 28, **Prior James** and his brother, **Father Lawrence Piotrkowski (1894-1965)** returned from a week of fishing in the Olympics. On July 30, **Abbot Raphael Heider (1903-1971)** invested oblate novices at Visitation Parish in Tacoma. On July 31, the parents and brother of **Father Christopher Abair (1924-1988)** visited Saint Martin's (it was his mother's birthday).

Early in August, the battlemented coping over the portico of the south wing was removed and replaced by "streamlined" copper coping... On August 4, a \$50 per semester raise in college tuition was announced... On August 9, **Brother Francis Hehn (1881-1966)** completed an improved model of a voting machine to be used in chapter meetings (and it is still in use). On August 11, **Fathers Leonard Feeney (1908-1980)** and **Conrad Rausch (1921-2011)** were rehabilitating a number of bed frames in preparation for increased high school enrollments. On August 12, **Father William Dickerson** completed his work for a master's degree in psychology at Catholic University. On August 14, assignments for community members for the coming year were issued by **Abbot Raphael**. On August 15, **Father Pascal Merola** pronounced solemn vows as a Benedictine during a quasi-pontifical Mass offered by **Abbot Raphael**.

In other news, Assumption Parish in Seattle received a second resident assistant in newly ordained **Father Thaddaeus Arledge (1927-2015)**, **Father Arnold Fox (1903-1999)** being first assistant and **Father Alcuin Lawrence (1906-1984)** the pastor. There were 700 children in the parish school... **Father Timothy Lamm (1928-2018)** was made prefect for the junior-senior dorm, replacing **Father David Prebula (1918-2009)**, who became Saint Martin's infirmarian. **Father David** had been hospitalized at Providence, Seattle for back surgery on August 15. **Father Timothy** also became a dining room supervisor, along with **Father Leonard Feeney** for the high school and **Father Bertrand Trautman (1918-1972)** for the college... **Father Felix Wirth (1913-1984)** was named abbey guestmaster and chaplain to Saint Placid Priory. **Father Maurus Keller** was named college registrar.

Off to school were **Fathers Dunstan Curtis (1921-1981)** for his doctorate in education at Stanford University in California and **Father Placidus Reischman (1926-2000)** for graduate work in biology at Catholic University... Of our clerics, **Father George Seidel** would be in Rome for his second year at Sant' Anselmo. **Fraters Adrian Parcher** and **Kenneth Keller** were second year theologians at Mount Angel Seminary in Oregon. **Fraters Alfred Hulscher(1933-2016)**, **Valerian Grubb (1932-1979)**, **Cletus Bradley** and **Peter Sand** were first-year theologians at Mt. Angel. At home, **Frater Gerard Frederick** was in second philosophy, and **Fraters Kieran Cunningham (1925-2005)** and **Thomas Wolford** were in first philosophy.

Father Michael Feeney (1920-2000) reported a new high for high school enrollment (230 students) for the school year to begin September 4. Of these, 180 were boarders and 50 day students. While college enrollment, with classes beginning September 12, was uncertain, 80 freshmen were expected, with 150 returning from last year. In the high school there was a flat fee of \$800, all-inclusive: board and room, books, lab fees and laundry. In college, tuition was \$200 per semester, board and room \$170 per semester, student body fee of \$12.50 and incidental fee \$5.00. Books and lab fees were in addition. For college education, we were still \$400 under the national average, thanks to the donated services of several dozen Benedictine monks.