



ABBOT TIMOTHY KELLY, OSB

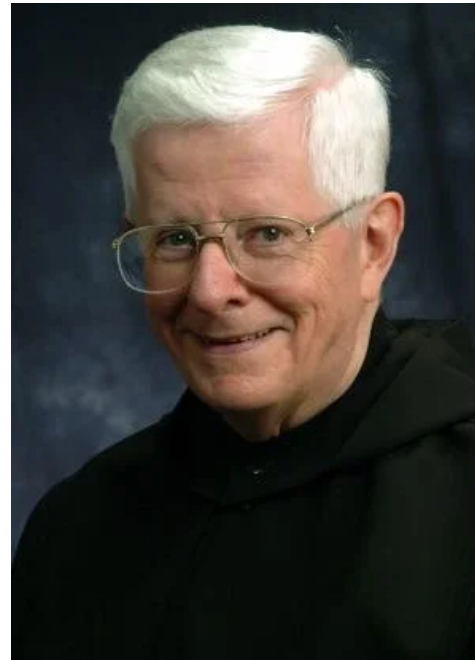
MONK OF SAINT
JOHN'S ABBEY
COLLEGEVILLE,
MINNESOTA

BORN: 20 APRIL 1934

PROFESSED: 11 JULY 1955

ORDAINED: 3 JUNE 1961

DIED: 7 OCTOBER 2010



Abbot Timothy Thomas Kelly OSB, ninth abbot of Saint John's Abbey for eight years (1992-2000) and president of the American-Cassinese Congregation of Benedictine men for nine years (2001-2010), died at Collegeville, Minnesota.

Thomas Daniel Kelly was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on April 20, 1934, to John Dunn and Ann Elizabeth (McGrath) Kelly, the youngest of six children (five boys and one girl). Thomas attended two years in public schools in Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin, and after the family moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, he attended public school until the sixth grade when he transferred to Annunciation Parish School for his seventh and eighth grade years. Thomas then attended Saint Thomas Academy in Saint Paul, Minnesota, from 1948 to 1952. Following his graduation from Saint Thomas Academy in 1952, Thomas entered Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, as a divinity student.

After two years of college, Thomas applied for the novitiate at Saint John's Abbey and he entered on July 10, 1954, receiving the religious name of Timothy. Timothy made his profession as a Benedictine monk on July 11, 1955. In his novitiate autobiography, Timothy recollected his call to religious life: "My interest in religious life began about my sophomore year in high school and continued to grow during my remaining years in high school. My coming to Saint John's, I can see now, was certainly God's providence. Right

from the start I liked Saint John's. Everything seemed to appeal to me. I came to the conclusion that the real reason I came to Saint John's was the Benedictines and the Benedictine way of life."

Timothy completed his BA degree in philosophy from Saint John's University in 1957 and continued with his theological studies. On June 3, 1961, Father Timothy was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Peter W. Bartholome at Saint Mary's Cathedral, Saint Cloud, Minnesota.

Following his ordination, he began his career first as an English instructor at Saint John's University and prefect in Saint Anselm's Hall (1961-62).

Timothy then spent a year in our monastery foundation in Mexico where he taught theology at Colegio del Tepeyac (1962-63), followed by a year at our foundation in the Bahamas at Saint Augustine's College where he taught English. During the summer months, he attended graduate school at the University of Minnesota.

In 1964 Timothy was assigned as associate pastor at Saint Anselm's Church in the Bronx, New York (1964-70), and then became pastor of the parish until 1972. Returning to Minnesota, he was appointed chaplain for the Benedictine sisters at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery in Crookston (1972-78).

From 1978-80, Timothy attended the Monastic Institute at Sant' Anselmo in Rome when he was appointed master of novices at Saint John's Abbey in July 1980. While novice master, he was the director of the Institute for Religion and Human Development at Saint John's University (1980-85) and also taught theology for graduate and undergraduate students from 1980-88.

In the fall of 1986, Timothy was one of six American monastics selected by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in India as part of the dialogue sponsored by the North American Board of East/West Dialogue.

During the middle and late 1980s, Timothy served as an advisory board member and adjunct faculty member of the Academy for Spiritual Formation of the United Methodist Church (UMC). He was associated with The Upper Room, the publishing agency of UMC located in Nashville, Tennessee. He is especially remembered for his presentations on New Testament spirituality with a focus on *lectio divina*, the prayerful reading of the bible that he consistently highlighted. One of his Methodist coworkers identified Timothy as a "fun, down-to-earth, yet confident and thoughtful, intelligent, creative and cheerful, open-hearted teaching and mentoring presence. What a spirit of Christ he was among us!"

Timothy played a key role in the founding of St. Brigid of Kildare Monastery, an ecumenical women's monastery for which he procured the use of a house on abbey property. The monastery was blessed on February 1, 2000, the feast day of St. Brigid, and was eventually relocated in St. Joseph, Minnesota.

On January 7, 1989, he was appointed Administrator of Mary Help of Christians Abbey in Belmont, North Carolina. Returning to Saint John's Abbey in June 1992, Timothy was appointed rector of Saint John's Seminary.

In November 1992, the monks of Saint John's Abbey elected Timothy, then 58, to succeed Abbot Jerome Theisen OSB as their ninth abbot. Abbot Jerome Theisen OSB (1930-95) had been elected in September 1992 as Abbot Primate, titular head of the worldwide Benedictine Order.

When Abbot Timothy was elected there were 235 Benedictine monks at Saint John's Abbey engaged in its varied apostolates across Minnesota, and with missions in the Bahamas and Japan. During his eight years in office, he was involved in the countries and culture of the Pacific Rim, in present monastic communities in Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia, and China. Timothy encouraged the Saint John's sponsored community of St. Anselm's Priory in Tokyo to move from its metropolitan site to the less urban setting at Fujimi, Japan, completed in 1999.

In 1996 Timothy cooperated in the establishment of the Benedictine Commission for China, which seeks to listen, study, plan, and be ready to act when opportunities present themselves to promote Christianity to the 1.2 billion people of China. He encouraged the further education of Chinese clergy, laypeople, and religious by offering them Saint John's as place for advanced study in Scripture, liturgy, and pastoral ministry.

In 1993, Abbot Timothy, along with former Saint John's University president Brother Dietrich Reinhart, initiated the Interfaith Sexual Trauma Institute (ISTI), which was created to establish a forum for open dialogue between both victims and previous perpetrators of clergy sexual abuse. The institute published books and a newsletter, as well as sponsoring regional and national workshops related to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

Abbot Timothy served on some 22 committees of Saint John's University, Saint John's Preparatory School, the Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Culture Research, and the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library. One of his favorite projects was carrying forward the dream of his predecessor Abbot Jerome Theisen OSB in building an abbey guesthouse. He laid the groundwork for the initial planning stages before his term as abbot expired.

Abbot Timothy was elected Abbot President of the American-Cassinese Congregation for a six-year term in June of 2001 and again in 2007. As

Abbot President for nine years, he moderated all abbatial elections in the congregation and also attended numerous visitations at the 20 Benedictine communities in the Cassinese Congregation.

In April 2010 Abbot Timothy was diagnosed with cancer of the esophagus. He reflected in his letter to the community of April 11, 2010, "I am very much at peace with this and not afraid of dying. The past several years have been wonderfully grace-filled years for me. Your prayers are very important to me and I promise my prayers for you as well." Following the regimen of radiation and chemotherapy, he weakened slowly and died on October 7, 2010.

Abbot Timothy was preceded in death by his parents John Dunn and Ann Elizabeth (McGrath) Kelly, and four brothers: John Raymond Kelly and his wife Clara (Sarasin) Kelly; Donald James Kelly; Robert Jerome Kelly and his wife Mary Kate (Webb) Kelly; and Lawrence William Kelly. He is survived by his sister Denise Ann Kelly of Delaware, Iowa; his sister-in-law Edith (Hove) Kelly of Alexandria, Minnesota; eight nieces and eight newphews; and special friends Bill and Lorrie Ulfers of Red Hook, New York; Bill Lombardi of Bronx, New York; Phillip Smith of Eden Prairie, Minnesota; Paul and Edna Berres of Houston, Texas; Bishop Victor Balke; and the Saint John's monastic community.

The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated for Abbot Timothy Kelly on October 13, 2010, at 3:30 p.m. in Saint John's Abbey Church. Inurnment will be at a later date.

At the request of family members, all memorials for Abbot Timothy are preferred to Saint John's Abbey.

We ask each community member to offer two Masses according to the manner of his participation in the priesthood of Christ. We commend our brother, Abbot Timothy, to your prayers.

Abbot John Klassen OSB
and the monks of Saint John's Abbey

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