

The Abbey Message

Subiaco Abbey

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Coury House: 60 Years of Benedictine Hospitality

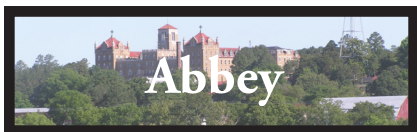
by Br. Francis Kirchner, OSB

The first stop for most visitors to Subiaco Abbey is Coury House, the guest-retreat facility overlooking the valley to the north. Next spring Coury House will mark 60 years of welcoming all guests as Christ in the spirit of St. Benedict. Abbot Michael Lensing dedicated the building on April 28, 1963, and retreats began the following June. In the first 10 years, Coury House welcomed more than 10,000 retreatants and other guests and had become a prominent fixture in the ministry of the monastery.

After the completion of the Abbey church in March 1959, monks and alumni recognized the next pressing need was for adequate facilities to fulfill the monastic ministry of hospitality. When there seemed to be some hesitancy to pursue the building of a guest-retreat house because of the estimated cost of \$400,000, George Coury of Miami, Florida, a 1924 graduate of the Academy, announced a gift of \$50,000 to launch the campaign. He and his wife Amelia would eventually fund about one-fourth of the construction costs.



Br. Francis Kirchner, Guest Master and staff of Coury House



Br. Francis Kirchner


Father Herbert Vogelpohl was appointed the director of Coury House and became the heart and soul of the apostolate for over 20 years. He worked with Oblates of the Abbey in founding a Retreat League to develop and support the retreat ministry, and set a pattern of support for diocesan programs like Marriage Encounter and Cursillo.

Today Coury House continues to welcome thousands of retreatants and Academy parents and other guests every year. The facility contains 36 double-occupancy rooms, a Blessed Sacrament chapel, two large conference rooms and two private meeting rooms, and a bookstore/gift shop.

I have been the Guestmaster and Director of Coury House since 2009. I was minding my own business as groundskeeper of the Abbey when one day I was called to the office of Abbot Jerome Kodell. He asked me if I would accept this assignment and in my moment of shock I said “no”. This was obviously not the right answer, but he gave me time to reconsider and I did. And I am glad I did. As I look back on the past 13 years, I realize that they have been the happiest years of my life as a monk. It took me a while to learn the ropes, but I have always had a wonderful staff who work together as a team. I began to know the blessing of meeting people from all walks of life and eventually from all over the world, and to see the joy and peace that God would give them here.

Coury House is more than a center for retreats. It is a place where people of all faiths and backgrounds can relax, pray, and get away from the busy-ness of everyday to experience the presence of God.

One of our guests who brings retreat groups to the Abbey wrote recently about the experience of first-time visitors: “When they experience the warm welcome and hospitality of the brothers and the beauty of Subiaco, the grounds and the sanctuary, when they hear the bells and experience the sacred rhythm, they understand why I refer to this as a sacred place and they want to share it with their friends and return.”

This is a wonderful compliment but at the same time a challenge to us to continue to share the gift that has been handed down to us. We thank God for the blessing of these 60 years and ask for his continuing guidance in the years ahead. 



Guilty Praying

by Linda Freeman, Director of Development Operations

“God, I’m here again, asking for the same things I’ve asked for over and over.” Have you ever muttered these words as you settle in for your daily prayers? Ever since I was young, growing up in a Catholic home and receiving a Catholic elementary education, I’ve tried to continue the practice of reciting certain familiar prayers every day. Often I follow these with requests for special needs for myself, my friends and family, or even those strangers that I might have seen during my day who I just felt like might need someone to say a prayer for them. Then there are those times when I feel like I’m pestering God with the same request.

It is so difficult to discern whether God doesn’t answer those recurring prayers because I am asking for something that isn’t right for me or someone else, or maybe I just need to be more patient about it. Sometimes, I begin to feel guilty about asking for anything, given all the blessings that I already have in my life when so many others are suffering. Let’s face it – human nature makes us frustrated and confused even in the midst of praying!



If my mind is clear and my focus is where it should be, I'm quickly reminded (by the Holy Spirit, I believe) to be constant in prayer. ***"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."*** - *Philippians 4:6*

Never fear that God is not listening or that he has turned a deaf ear to your prayers. Never feel guilty about making that repeated request to him. If we allow ourselves to let the spirit of peace, trust and patience be the center of our prayers, then guilt has no place. Our God is faithful to us and continues to mold us according to his will for our lives. Sooner or later, he will answer our prayers, even those he has heard from us a million times over. Or he won't and someday we will understand why.

As we move into another calendar year, one of my daily prayers will go forward with me – that God sends his blessings and protection to all the wonderful members of our Subiaco Family (that's you, by the way!).

May 2023 bring you joy, peace, and answered prayers – even if God says "not this time, my child." Lay that guilt to rest and be steadfast in prayer, just as God is steadfast in the lives he gave to us. Happy New Year! 

It feels great to be home! To say I am passionate about Subiaco is an understatement. I love this place and it warms my heart knowing I am back at the place that loves me back just as much. Thank you, Subiaco, for bringing me home to serve you, our alumni, and our many benefactors.

Saying "thank you" is simply not enough for everything you do for us. The number of endowments, scholarships, and capital improvements you have provided is amazing! Because of you, we can move forward with more student support, state-of-the-art facilities, innovative programs and assistance for our monks, faculty and staff. You are an important part of our success, and we THANK YOU tremendously. If you have not already decided how to make your own impact, please consider making a contribution through an outright gift or leaving your legacy through a planned gift. I am happy to visit with you about the many planned giving options we offer.

By leaving a legacy gift through your estate, you will automatically become a member of our prestigious legacy society. If you have already included Subiaco Abbey and Academy in your estate plan, we would be honored to offer you a membership into this society as well.

Simply put, planned giving can do two things:

- Lower taxes
- Trade a gift for income

As you consider what you can do for Subiaco, both now and in the future, we would be delighted to work with you to explore various ways in which you and your family can make a difference. We encourage you to download our free wills guide, which has been designed to assist you throughout the planning process. To learn more about IRA rollover benefits, please feel free to reach out to me anytime.

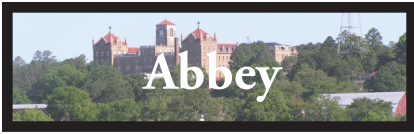
Best wishes to you and your family in 2023! Please let us know if you have any questions or if we can assist you in any way. I invite you to give me or Glenn Constantino a call or email anytime. My cell phone number is 479-438-3360 and email is glensing@subi.org. Glenn's cell phone is 479-438-2653 and email is gconstantino@subi.org.

We look forward to seeing you on campus! In the meantime, know how much we appreciate you and all that you do for Subiaco Abbey and Academy!

With much gratitude,

Director of Estate and Gift Planning






Succisa Virescit!

A few weeks back our Abbey had the pleasure of hosting a wonderful group of honors students from John Brown University. I was asked to share my own conversion story with them of how it was that God led a Baptist from North Carolina to become a Catholic to become a Priest to become a Monk to, finally, become an Abbot. In one of our later conversations, a young student shared that she was still trying to wrap her head around the fact that monks were actually REAL! Her astonishment was quite genuine: "I thought y'all were dead!" Well, I am pleased to announce that we are most assuredly NOT dead.

This young student's perception was one that others have had as well. At a time when the number of priests and religious is quickly decreasing in places like North America and Europe, God strangely continues to send men to Subiaco to become monks. In fact, of the last 20 men that became monks in our community, 17 came from outside Arkansas. I reference this because for some divine reason it seems that God has decided that monasticism is still needed in Arkansas.

Benedictine monks of old understood this as well. If you travel to Monte Cassino in Italy where St. Benedict established his Abbey, you will still find a community of monks after 1,500 years. That Abbey was destroyed by the Lombards in the late sixth century, but it came back. It was destroyed by the Saracens in the late ninth century, but it came back. It was devastated by an earthquake in the mid-14th century, but it came back. Even when the whole complex was bombed in February 1944 during World War II, it still came back. Not surprisingly, on the tour of the monastery, you will be shown a window that displays the motto of Monte Cassino: *Succisa Virescit*. Loosely translated, it's come to mean "having been cut down, it grows green again" or "cut them down and they will grow stronger." Whatever the translation, you can see that this motto could easily have been ours at Subiaco.

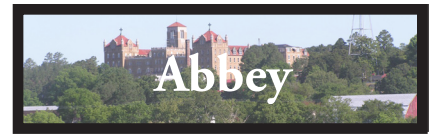
We were devastated by fires in 1901 and 1927. We have lived through pandemics such as the Spanish Flu and now Covid. Our numbers have been as low as three monks and as high as 127 monks. In fact, compared to many other abbeys, our 34 men in the monastic life at Subiaco is quite remarkable. Even more so, though, is the fact that we have more lay involvement in our mission and ministry than ever before. I was recently speaking to our Oblates at their Fall retreat and it was thrilling to hear how God had called each one of them to this abbey as well. As you are reading this, we will have just celebrated the solemn profession of Br. Gabriel Jannise from Beaumont, Texas (pictured on my right in the photo). He, too, was drawn in some divine way to commit his life as a Benedictine monk in Arkansas. It is such a heartfelt joy for me to hear how God continues to draw us all to this place called Subiaco! Many attempts have been tried to cut us down, but God's hand continues to allow us to grow anew at Subiaco.

So, I am here to officially report that we are not yet dead but are still daily praying and chanting for your needs and those of the world. It is not by chance that we have all been led here, but by Providence! May we continue to pray for each other in the mission of Subiaco! **Succisa Virescit!!!** 



Br. Gabriel Jannise with Abbot Elijah Owens

+Abbot Elijah Owens



SEPTEMBER

You may have seen the illustration entitled “not my job.” It shows the outside white line of a highway swerving around a fallen branch encroaching on the roadway. Monks all have their own assigned jobs, but we don’t ignore other requests, needs, things that are not our job, if we can respond to do what needs to be done. Several examples: Brother Damien took on the task of trapping a family of cats that had moved in by our back door. He patiently lured the wild mother cat and her little ones ever closer to traps until, one by one, the gate fell closed behind them. Then a local lady took over to find homes for them. A neighbor called upon Brother Adrian for skunk removal. He set traps and caught five, I think. His past efforts to keep raccoons out of his garden corn patch gave him the credentials for the job. Fr. Mark responded to the plea of a handicapped woman who lost two of her dogs within a month’s time. He became a gravedigger— “not his job”—but what needed to be done. Another monk finally could not stand the sight of a toilet beside the road between Subiaco and Scranton. He stopped and loaded it up. Not his job, but certainly a good service to the whole area.

On September 12, archeologist Dr. Anabel Ford of the University of California at Santa Barbara led an informal discussion of her work in

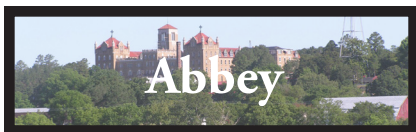


Fr. Jerome, Fr. Richard, Dr. Anabel Ford, and Fr. Mark all met when each was in Belize at our former Santa Familia Priory.

Belize over the past nearly 40 years. Her team had used the facilities of Santa Familia Monastery as headquarters for several years, and had excavated mounds on Carmelita Farm, the ranch property of the monastery. She reminisced about her associations with the Santa Familia monks, and invited Frs. Richard, Mark, and Jerome to share memories of the collaboration. Dr. Ford has developed the concept of the “Forest Garden” as her understanding of how the classic Maya lived in a sustainable relationship with their environment. According to this concept, the Mayans managed the forest for their own purposes, extracting useful materials and products and introducing compatible plants, such that very little forest was

cleared. Rather, the wild forest was turned into a thriving garden, which sustained a large population in a balanced interaction between humans and the rest of nature.

A few days later, on the 14th, the ashes of a long-time Belizean friend, Mary Lou Zaiden, were placed in a niche of the columbarium, next to the abbey cemetery. She had been a powerful presence in the community during the heyday of Santa Familia Monastery. A person of strong convictions and unwavering opinions, she was also extremely loyal and generous. After her retirement to Kansas City, she was able to visit Subiaco a number of times, always bringing large consignments of her fabulous pastries.



The refurbished water tower now gleams brilliantly in the sun once again. Our iconic tower is old-fashioned, true; but is a landmark for the abbey and community, holding many special memories. The ball on the very top, where Brother Jerry used to sit and play the accordion and mouth harp, has given way to a two-tiered vent. Other than that, the tower looks exactly as it has since its construction in 1928. Tragically, the tower was not yet operational at the time of the Great Fire in December of 1927.

OCTOBER

Good rains in August promoted a growth spurt of meadow grasses, and by mid-September into October, farmers tried to make up for the missed cutting of hay, due to the drought of July. Round bales were everywhere! However, the drought and heat of midsummer returned by the end of September,

and ranchers had to begin feeding out that precious last cutting of hay.

A freeze on October 19 ended the habanero pepper season nearly a month early. Climate change experts say that weather extremes will become the norm, and our experience of the last six months bears this out. Here's a summary: May into June—excessive rain; second half of June and all of July—terrible heat and no rain; second half of September and all of October—very dry and very hot, except for the surprise early freeze. In mid-October, this note was posted: “Please conserve water and pray for significant rain. The Abbey lakes are about four feet below full.”

October is the month for fall festivals, and many of these include beer. Our Country Monks Brewing had a busy month. Brewmaster Br. Sebastian delivered beer to Dallas and to Alabama, the latter for his parents' 50th wedding anniversary celebration. At the same time, a beer festival in North Little Rock featured Abbey beer and patrons called ours “the best of the lot.”

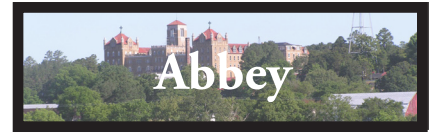
Br. Ambrose took beer to a Russellville harvest festival. Two young grads, the **Hertlein** boys, **Luke '19** and **Jack '15**, represented Country Monks Brewing at the Fort Smith Oktoberfest. A patron reported that “Your brittle beer had rave reviews.” I (Fr. Mark) add to that accolade. This is now my favorite beer too.

In late October, the installation of the controlled access devices for the Abbey and Courty House

was complete, and they were activated. This is a pretty big deal. Until recently, none of the many—dozens—of entries into our main complex were locked at night. Then, around ten years ago, the doors on the Academy side (West Side) were locked, and now the Abbey is following suit. Not that we monks worried about intruders. We liked not having to carry keys, and being able to get in anytime day or night. But others seemed to worry about us, insurers did not approve, and advisors advised, etc. So now we all have to carry a “fob” which will grant access at night, and keep the combination of a couple of doors with a keypad, in our head or wallet. Actually, the reality is not as onerous as it sounded. Few of us are out and about after the “witching hour” when the doors lock down for the night. It has not caused any complaints so far, and, in fact, I would like to see sometime whether my “fob” works.

The communications bulletin of Oct. 17 reported on the peanut brittle operation as follows:

“Special thanks to Charlie Kremers and John Frantz who are using their culinary skills to help in the peanut brittle kitchen, and to Brother André, who coordinates workers, orders supplies, and prepares the kitchen. Labeling of the cans is done by Br. Ephrem and Br. Joseph Heath, while Fr. Richard continues to provide wisdom and oversight.” This writer wants to acknowledge also the work of the development office staff, who prepare the orders for



shipping, and the many volunteers who donate many hours of labor. Special thanks to Dennis and Dawn Epping, who again contributed a solid week of brittle factory work. All I can say is that, every evening at Vespers, we pray for “all our friends, oblates, and benefactors.”

NOVEMBER

Fr. Mark and Br. Gabriel were selected for jury duty for the months of September through November. We attended the “cattle call” at the Logan County courthouse, where all the prospective jurors hear a *ferverino* by a circuit judge about the importance of this civic duty, and instructions for our service. Br. Gabriel asked the judge to be excused. When he told the judge that he was a nursing student, the judge said “Say no more,” and excused him from service. I decided that I could probably arrange my pastoral duties so as to serve. As it turned out, every one of the scheduled court days were canceled, so we never had to go in for jury selection at all.

I did serve on a jury some years ago, and was very impressed by the conscientious work and demeanor of the jurors. (We found the defendant guilty.)

Academy art teacher Jennifer Smith and her students produced a wonderful display of student art in the gallery of Centenary Hall for Parents Weekend. The student works centered on the theme of the Amazon Rain Forest, with all kinds of media representing the


flora and fauna of Amazonia. Their works were grouped around a large papier-mâché forest tree with a monkey, a waterfall, and a bat cave. Well done, Ms. Smith and boys!

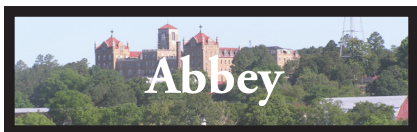
St. Benedict Church hosted the Thanksgiving Interfaith Service, sponsored by the Ministerial Alliance of Logan County, on November 13. Ministers of six denominations participated. Pastor Kellie Kitson of the Paris Community Church preached the main message. Fr. Mark emceed the event. Many people noted that she called me “sweet” in her remarks. How ’bout that! I tell people that I have not been called “sweet” very often, but I always am. This group enjoyed snacks and the art gallery display after the church service.

The Abbey is engaged in strategic planning during October and November. Fr. Patrick introduced the task, and advised that input would be garnered by small group meetings rather than by a survey or a questionnaire. He then told us that the groups had not been set up and that we, the community members, had to form ourselves into five groups, and that the steering committee expected notice of the groups that had been formed by evening of the next day! “What?”, I said, and many said, “How are we supposed to do that?” Almost miraculously, by noon of the next day the five groups had formed and submitted their rosters. This has to be a work of the Holy Spirit, and so surely blessings will flow. We have one more discussion session to complete as November

ends. Br. Ambrose, of the steering committee, urges us on to complete the task and voiced a concern over the work of collating all the input. Yes, that will be a task, for sure!

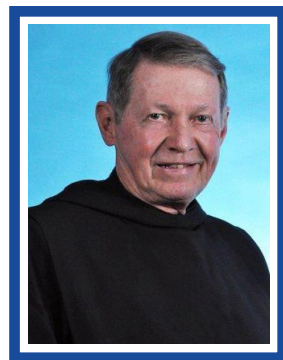
On Wednesday, November 2, the community processed from the abbey church to the monastic cemetery for the All Souls Day prayers. A number of visitors and relatives of the deceased monks joined in. As the Abbot blessed each grave with holy water and incense, the names of all monks buried in the cemetery are read. Abbot Elijah got a workout as he rapidly covered all the levels of our hillside cemetery, twice. Wednesday evening is Religious Education night for the parish children, so they processed from the parish center to the abbey cemetery for prayers there also. The vigil candles on top of each marker made quite an impressive display for the youngsters, since it was quite dark when they arrived around 7 p.m.

As the number of priest monks decreases—and especially able-bodied priest monks—five Brothers received training and have been installed as Acolytes. Now that we have returned to the practice of reception of the Precious Blood, these Acolytes will be able to assist with the offering of the chalice, with the purifying of the vessels, and with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Our five new Acolytes are Brothers Damien, Roch, Adrian, Ambrose, and Gabriel. 



Saint of World War II

by Fr. Jerome Kodell, OSB



The story of the heroic witness of an inconspicuous Austrian farmer is gradually gaining momentum and he may one day be coupled with Mother Teresa as two great saints of our era. Franz Jaegerstaetter was declared a martyr and beatified by Pope Benedict XVI in 2007. Blessed Franz is already being compared to St. Thomas More. Like More, without any support except his intense faith, Jaegerstaetter sacrificed everything because of his refusal to disobey the commands of God at the order of the state.

Franz Jaegerstaetter was born in 1907 and grew up in the small Austrian village of Sankt Radegund, near the German border about 30 miles north of Salzburg. He married Franziska Schwaninger and they made their life on a small farm, raising three daughters. Franz was a respected hardworking citizen, offered at one point the position of mayor of his town, which he declined.

He was not known as particularly religious, but he had a strong sense of his Catholic faith and principles, and when German troops invaded Austria in 1938, he was the only person in the village to vote against the incursion. This put him on a collision course with the Nazis. He had no support in his stance from his fellow villagers, who in fact suppressed his dissent and reported unanimous approval to the authorities.


Blessed Franz Jaegerstaetter
is already being compared to
St. Thomas More.

In June 1940, Franz, at age 33, was drafted into the German Army. He refused to take the "Hitler oath," which required a declaration of unconditional obedience to Hitler. He would give due obedience to a human authority, but would not render any human being the unconditional obedience due only to God. This did not become a major issue at the time, and he had an opportunity to discuss his position with his pastor and even the local bishop. Neither of them gave him any support in his stand on Catholic principle.

When he was called to active duty in February 1943, Franz declared his conscientious objection and offered to serve as a medic, which was refused. He was arrested and imprisoned, first locally and then in Berlin. He was given many opportunities to recant and to sign the Hitler oath, but he would not. His last recorded words before his death by guillotine on August 9, 1943, were: "I am completely bound in inner union with the Lord." Meanwhile, during his years of agonizing over his decision, his wife Franziska, who stood by him in his decision, was being ostracized and vilified by the local villagers.

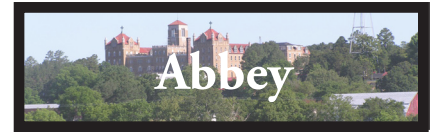
The Jaegerstaetter story was practically unknown until it was discovered by U.S. sociologist Gordon Zahn, who in 1964 published the biography In Solitary Witness, which began to bring Jaegerstaetter's witness to worldwide attention. His heroic stand, rooted in Catholic principles, influenced the discussions of conscientious objection at Vatican Council II.

At the beatification ceremony of Franz Jaegerstaetter in Linz, Austria, on October 26, 2007, his widow Franziska, now 94, was present with their daughters. The mesmerizing moment of the ceremony came when Franziska kissed the urn containing ashes of her husband, now relics of a saint, and handed it over. The crowd of 5,000 from all over the world, including many bishops, rose in a standing ovation.

Several books and films have now been published on the witness of Franz Jaegerstaetter, especially the 2019 film, A Hidden Life. The official trailer and excerpts from that movie are available for viewing on YouTube. 

Fear Not the Call

by Br. Ambrose Fryer, OSB, Assistant Vocations Director




“For God did not give us a spirit of fear . . .” (2 Tim 1:7)

When one believes he is being called to religious life, it is met with some trepidation. Christ’s teaching to “[leave] everything you have . . . and come follow me” (*Luke 18:24-34*) is diametrically opposed to the culture that teaches to get as much as you can and hold on to it as long as you can. The thought of giving up independence and freedom is also a stumbling block for those who are called to this unique and radical way of seeking God. Despite the second-guesses and worries, discerning and committing to monastic life is much like other major life events. It is not that one fears the actual event necessarily, but rather the unknown that is associated with the choice.

Uncertainties in life are a familiar experience. A little concern or worry is important and sometimes necessary to motivate one or to discover one’s priorities. However, needless worrying is incompatible with the trust one is to have in God. Christ, in his core moral teachings, found in the Sermon on the Mount, instructs man not to worry (*cf Mt 6:25-34*). Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated, “I do not know what the future holds, but I do know who holds the future.” God provides all things; man just needs to cooperate with and accept the provisions he is given.

So the challenge in casting aside fear? Fully accepting the truth that God is the source of the vocational call. To accept requires God’s grace. One who prayerfully discerns and freely chooses to follow, even if one discovers he is not in the place God wants, this God uses for growth and grace. God desires the heart which seeks Him (*cf Ps. 51:19*). If one enters into a new endeavor with little thought or reflection, upon realizing the choice of life is not for him, he leaves with a feeling of resentment and/or frustration. However, the one who prayerfully seeks to do the will of God, even if he chooses either incorrectly or at the wrong time of life, there is a recognition of growth in both one’s faith and trust in God when he leaves. Thus the choice, though not the “correct” choice, was not wasted or a thing to resent. Rather it is an experience and reminder that God guides his life, and one is to follow God’s designs, not one’s own.

It is through the challenges and “wrong” choices that the person devoted to God is able to more clearly understand the providence of God guiding all things. Seek to trust as you discern. May each one of us take to heart the words of St. Angela Merici: “Do not lose heart, even if you should discover that you lack qualities necessary for the work to which you are called. He who called you will not desert you, but the moment you are in need he will stretch out his saving hand.” 

PRAYER HOTLINE 1-800-350-5889

Let us join you in praying for your needs. Prefer to email?
Please direct your requests to prayer@subi.org

Prayers requested for family and friends can include a wellness or sympathy card sent to them from the monks of Subiaco. Please provide the name and address to send the card with your requests.

For Mass intentions, please call 479-934-1023.

Memorials for deceased family and friends or **Living Tributes** for birthdays, anniversaries, or special occasions are available at

www.countrymonks.org/supportus or call 479-934-1001.



Through their ministry of prayer and hospitality, the monks of Subiaco offer the opportunity for a peaceful and spiritual final resting place. The Subiaco Abbey Columbarium is a repository for the ashes of people who have been cremated. For more information, we invite you to contact Glenn Constantino, Procurator at:

479-438-2653 or
gconstantino@subi.org





Giving Students a Voice

by Cheryl Goetz, Assistant Head for Academics

Subiaco Academy's Board of Trustees and administrative team has begun work on new strategic initiatives for our Academy. When surveying students during the process, members of these groups realized that more opportunities for students to provide greater input in the life of our Academy was a necessity.

To address this need, several committees composed largely of representatives of the student body have been established. Our Academic Programming Committee has been established to give students a platform for sharing student voice regarding curriculum, academic facility needs, and staffing concerns. Students discuss aspects of academic programming, and those discussions will lead to recommendations for curriculum, academic facility future planning, and the retention and recruitment of highly qualified and mission-appropriate faculty. Fourteen student volunteers from grades 8-12, plus two adult staff members serving as advisor and moderator, form the membership of the committee which had its first meeting on November 29th.

The Residential Life Committee is a cohort of students and faculty formed to discuss and recommend outcomes to both issues and opportunities in our Residential Life program. Our Residential Life Committee has students who have shown an interest in leadership who will take on active roles within our community by promoting espoused values on the Hill and upholding the mission and core values of our Academy and Residential Life. The faculty are there to offer an "adult" and/or "parent" perspective and to foster student leadership. This committee is made up of nine students in grades 7-12, with three adult members and one adult moderator.

Two other committees will be formed soon to discuss other issues of campus life such as menus and student activities.



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Strategic Planning at Subiaco Academy

by Dr. David Wright, Headmaster



In April 2019, the Board of Trustees at Subiaco Academy began a strategic planning process utilizing an outside facilitator, who guided the process to a very successful conclusion. This three-year plan took the form of initiatives that resulted in the attainment of some important goals for the school (unity, facilities, programs, financial sustainability, enrollment and marketing). In preparation for the next strategic plan, we have utilized many resources over the past year and gained insights from multiple constituents. The Board of Trustees officially kicked off the latest planning process at their meeting on November 4, 2022. Here are the key elements of our Strategic Plan:


1. Objectives (top-level themes that will drive Subiaco Academy forward)
2. Goals (under each objective, these will be specific, measurable, and time-sensitive)
3. Action Items (steps that members of our community will be responsible for implementing in order to accomplish the goals)

The characteristics of our strategic plan that will make it successful are:

1. Inclusive process (include students, parents, staff, alumni, and monks)
2. Rooted in research (data will drive our process and plan)
3. Living, breathing document (will not sit on a shelf)
4. Aspirational and actionable
5. Three-year plan
6. Open communication (updates and progress provided periodically)



It is our hope that the new strategic plan will be adopted by the Board of Trustees in the spring of 2023. We will communicate our progress as we work toward making Subiaco Academy the best school possible.

As we analyzed the data from recent surveys and comments, we noticed that the students are craving a greater voice in how the Academy moves forward. During the two-year COVID-19 pandemic, we have unintentionally reduced the avenues by which students can take ownership of their Subiaco experience. Our immediate goal in rectifying this situation is to create several student-focused actionable committees. Each member of the administrative team (Ms. Goetz, Mr. Berry, Mr. Fortney, and myself) will be inviting a cross-section of students to join us to positively impact the Subiaco Academy experience for all. 

The Multiplicity of the Concept of Discipline

by Dr. David Wright, Headmaster

When a student at Subiaco Academy hears the word *discipline*, what do they surmise the meaning to be? Too often, that word is associated with the negative connotation of punishment for actions unbecoming of a Subi-man. To be honest, that is understandable because there are times when students are held accountable for their actions and the disciplinary measures of the institution are enforced. As we work to educate the whole person in our Benedictine traditions at our Academy, my hope is for a reckoning toward a revised understanding of this important word.


Dictionaries define the word *discipline* in terms of two primary driving forces (paradigms). The first correlates with rules, correction, punishment, and obedience. The latter focuses on self-control, instruction, and training. I would suggest that as humans, if we focused more intently on the latter, we would not be so fearful of the former. When studying the root and meaning of the word, there is a notion that it originates from the Latin word *discipulus* (meaning *pupil*). This is also the source of the word *disciple*.

When people succeed in life's journeys, they are generally disciplined in their daily life. We hear human success stories, and the individuals often cite a discipline in their life that enabled them to reach goals and thereby fulfill their aspirations. We call this self-discipline. This is different from motivation. There are numerous times in our



lives where we are stimulated to make things happen (motivation), but self-regulation and maintaining a regiment of action (discipline) is different. Being motivated is fleeting, while maintaining discipline is unwavering. Having consistency is the key to directing the path forward and realizing our full potential.

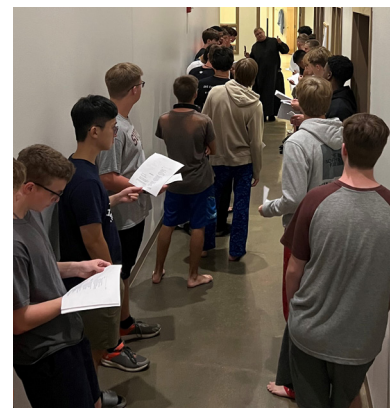
Inspiring men and women from religious orders are disciplined in their faith-walk. They are resolute in their prayer-life, unflappable in their service to others, and abiding in their solemn vows. Exceptional academic students are disciplined in homework assignments, study habits, and yearning to learn. Extraordinary athletes are disciplined in their workout routine, attentive to their sleep and eating habits, and they are committed to making themselves better daily. Noteworthy leaders are disciplined in helping others and the organizations they serve. The maximization of potential is attainable, but self-discipline is necessary to move from mediocrity to phenomenal.

I often remark that Subiaco Academy is different. I follow that statement with – it is different in all the positive senses of the word. We ask young men to be groomed and dressed in a professional manner – that is different. We ask them to lean on faith instead of fear – very different from many of their peers. We ask boys to grow graciously into men and go into the world to be morally sound and integrity-filled leaders in their family, communities, and world. Self-discipline is required and very necessary to accomplish the lofty goals our students have for themselves. When students recognize the power that discipline (self-discipline) plays in their current and future success, it is my hope that they will commit themselves to being that Subi-man we know they are capable of. If so, they might not ever need to worry about the other definition (punishment) of the word. 

Residential Life at Our Academy


by Jesse W. Fortney, Assistant Head of School for Enrollment/Community Outreach

Our boarding program started the 2022-2023 academic year with 76 boarders. While a vast majority of those boarders carry US passports, we also have boarders from S. Korea, Canada, Curaçao, and the Bahamas. We also welcomed Matt Noble, alum, and most recently Director of Alumni Relations in the Development Office, as the Head Residential Life Coordinator (formerly known as Deans) in Fuhrmann Hall. Joining Matt in Fuhrmann Hall is John Frantz (kitchen). Our live-out staff include Tommy Haas (faculty and baseball coach), Isaac Cotherman (faculty and football coach), Devin Ward (faculty), and Kinzer Matjazic (enrollment management and wrestling coach). In Heard Hall we have Nick McDaniel serving as the Head Residential Life Coordinator along with Elvis Janga. Adam Creek (football coach and transportation) is our live-out staff in Heard.



To complement the work of the residential life coordinators, five prefects have been selected to be liaisons between the students and the dorm staff. Those prefects are Gio Vargas, Nick Gehrig, Travis Wolf, John Bui, and Anthony Gehrig.

This year, we have reinstituted Compline with the Monks on Monday and Thursday evenings at 8:30 pm. We have also resumed off campus trips for our residents. These trips include both the lake cabin and Walmart several times each, as well as opportunities to visit Crystal Bridges, to go to Fort Smith for bowling and movies, to visit a haunted house and maze, attend a county fair, and the opportunity for Halloween costume shopping in Clarksville. Trips planned for the spring will include hiking, camping, fishing, kayaking and canoeing, and yes, more trips to Walmart and the lake cabin.

On a closing note, a huge thank-you goes out to the maintenance department for new kitchenettes in the residential life coordinators apartments in Heard Hall. Another thank-you goes out to Mike Berry for securing both students help and access to the field house so the boarders can work out during the week (after study hall) and on the weekends. 

Alumni What's Up



Steve Susi '89 was hired as Director of Brand Communication at Siegel & Gale. Siegel & Gale is a marketing/branding firm that works with large companies such as Allstate, HP, Humana, 3M, and many others. The firm also designed the current NBA logo.



Daniel Dunham '14 traveled to Amsterdam in early November. He met up with fellow Subi Alum **Michael Osepa '11**. The two had a great time talking about life and their Subi days.



Victor Mendoza '06, head of oil and gas securitization at Donovan Ventures, was recently featured as a Forty Under 40 honoree. Throughout his professional life, Mendoza has always wanted to start his own business. Through the joint creation of Donovan Ventures, he was able to create an asset-backed security financing-focused group. This venture has led to the career milestone of completing his first ABS transaction with Diversified Energy, marking the first in a long line of successful transactions.

“As a boutique firm, which had not completed an ABS transaction before, we knew it would be challenging to get that first deal done,” he said. “We were lucky to have a great partner in our client, Diversified Energy, to trust in our capabilities.”

Mendoza believes that embracing new technological developments within the coming years will help the oil and gas industry continue to thrive in the years to come, which the new generation of energy professionals will help to usher in.

“As one of the oldest industries in our nation, the oil and gas industry, although continuously adapting new technologies, has been one of ‘this is the way it’s been done’,” he said. “The younger generation offers different perspectives that may bring improvements to our industry.”

“From data analytics to machine learning, our firm is working on bringing some of these things together into a FinTech product that will connect individual investors for direct investments into producing oil and gas assets. This will facilitate investment growth into our industry from different sources of capital,” Mendoza continued.



Sending Brothers Home



†**Joseph John Bezner '36**, age 103, passed away November 8, 2022. Joe was born the eighth of 12 children in Lindsay, TX, on February 11, 1919. He joined the Army National Guard soon after graduating from Subiaco Academy where he served his country as a surgical technician in World War II, discharged as a Staff Sergeant. While in the service, Joe met and married Anna Hebert on May 21, 1945. Joe was a loving husband and father to eight children and served as the patriarch of the Bezner family. He worked for several local businesses, then in 1979 he began his full-time career with Germania Insurance. In 1984 Joe opened the office in Lindsay where he worked until his retirement in 2002 at the age of 83. Survivors include three daughters; four sons; one son-in-law; 23 grandchildren; 60 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren. **For many years, Joe was Subiaco Academy's oldest living alumnus.**



†**Deacon Matthew J. Post '43**, age 97, of Altus, AR, died October 20, 2022. Following his graduation from Subiaco Academy, Matt was drafted into the U.S. Navy-Medical Corps for three years of active duty in the Pacific arena where he became a Pharmacist's Mate 2nd Class, and when honorably discharged he returned to St. Louis University to pursue a medical degree like his brother, **Dr. Jim Post '42**. He later joined his father at the family winery as a full-time grape grower and winemaker, and was soon running the business after his father had passed. Matt is preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Thomas Post and **Eugene Post '46**. Survivors include his wife of 70 years, Elizabeth Marie "Betty" Duerr Post; seven sons: **Matthew Post, Jr. '70** of Russellville, AR, **Paul Post '73** of Altus, **Peter Post '73** of Morrilton, Thomas Post of Harrison, **Andrew Post '78**, John Post, and **Joseph Post '83** all of Altus; five daughters; six siblings; 43 grandchildren; and 31 great-grandchildren.



†**Robert Joseph Scholtes '49**, age 90, of Sacramento, CA, passed away May 20, 2022. Born during the Great Depression and the third of eight children, Robert learned to be independent and hard-working at a young age. He began working for Western Union after high school and enlisted in the United States Navy in 1950, volunteering to serve in the Korean War. He later went on to serve two tours in Vietnam, serving in a medical capacity during both wars. He became an officer of the United States Navy in 1966 and retired as a Lieutenant Commander in 1977. He would later go on to work for the California State Prison System as a Medical Technical Assistant. Robert is survived by his wife of 65 years; children; grandchildren; great-grandchildren; one sister; and one brother.



†**Charles "Dutchy" John Papan Jr. '53**, age 86, of Maumelle, AR, passed away October 26, 2022. While a student at Subiaco Academy in 1953, he was captain of the football team. After graduation, Charles proudly served in the U.S. Army, Armored Tank Division, stationed in Germany. He was married for 63 years. He was a devoted member of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church where he was a Fourth-Degree member of Knights of Columbus. Charles lived a full life, enjoying golfing, hunting, and traveling. He was an avid supporter of the Arkansas Razorbacks. He served on the Board of the Arkansas State Golf Association. Charles is survived by his wife of 63 years; three daughters; one son; two sisters; six grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.



†**LeRoy A. Schad '54**, age 86, of Holyoke, CO, died August 7, 2022. He entered the Army in 1958 and then the US Army Reserve and was honorably discharged in 1964. He served in Korea in 1959 and was a member of the 1st Cavalry Division. LeRoy married in 1960. He was a member of the American Legion and the Knights of Columbus. LeRoy is survived by his wife; six children; and numerous grandchildren and great-children.



†**John N. Keating III '60**, age 80, passed away October 26, 2022. "Nick" graduated from University of Tulsa, and went to work for Sinclair Oil & Gas. Nick then moved to Dallas and worked with Arco Oil & Gas Co. in various accounting departments. In 1994, he married and soon became employed with the Texas Department of Human Services where he worked until he retired in 2006. Nick loved traveling and baking bread for family and friends. He is survived by his wife; three sons; one daughter; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild; and one sister.



†**John H. Huck, Jr. '62**, age 77, died September 19, 2022, in Sainte Genevieve, MO. He was a member of Jaycee Club and American Legion Post 150. He enjoyed retirement, sports and taking care of his ducks and chickens. He is survived by his wife; one son; two daughters; one sister; nine grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.



Michael A. Limbird '65, age 75, died October 15, 2022, in Little Rock, AR. Mike entered the U of A where he received his BS in Industrial Engineering in 1970, after which he entered the USAF OCS. As the back-seater (navigator/EWO) in an F-4 Phantom Jet, Mike saw action in the Vietnam War. He was stationed at Udorn, Thailand and Spangdahlem, Germany, earning the rank of Captain. After returning to the States, he completed his 7-year career as a Navigator Instructor at Mather AFB. His engineering career began at the ARDOT in 1978. In 1990, Mike returned to night classes at the U of A on the UALR campus to complete his MS in Engineering Management. At retirement, he was the Staff Materials Engineer in the Material Division of ARDOT. He was inducted into the Arkansas Academy of Industrial Engineers at the University of Arkansas in 2005 and is a past-president of the ARDOT Retirees. Mike is survived by his wife of 34 years; his brothers: **Mark Limbird '63**, **Bob Limbird '67**, and **Jim Limbird '69**.



†**Mike Costello '69**, age 71, passed away Saturday, November 26, 2022, in Pine Bluff, AR. Mike served in the United States Navy. He was preceded in death by three brothers, **Pat Costello '64**, **Paul Costello '71**, and **Terry Costello '75**. Survivors include two sons; two brothers: **Danny Costello '77** and **Tim Costello '79**; four grandchildren; and a great-grandchild.



†**Henry Alfred "Rusty" Barham III '73**, age 66, died September 9, 2022. Rusty received a Bachelor of Science in Zoology from Louisiana State University, where he was a member of the Kappa Alpha Order. He received a Juris Doctorate from LSU School of Law and went on to practice law for 39 years. For most of his legal career, Rusty was engaged in the banking industry, serving as In-house Counsel or Executive Regulatory Counsel. Until shortly before his death, he served as Senior Vice President and General Counsel to Evolve Bank & Trust, headquartered in Memphis, TN. Rusty is survived by his wife of 28 years; one daughter; and one son.



†**Brendan Emmanuel Kopacka '96**, age 45, of Warr Acres, OK, passed away September 19, 2022. Brendan was born September 9, 1977, in Oklahoma City, OK. Following graduation from Subiaco Academy, he received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Central Oklahoma. As a lifelong learner, Brendan obtained a Nursing Home Administrator license in 2014 and worked with the elderly population for many years thereafter. He was a member of St. Francis Catholic Church for several years. Survivors include his wife of 16 years; one daughter; one son; his mother and siblings.

A Place of Honor

by Tom Canada, Director of Alumni Relations

Subiaco Academy has produced servicemen in every branch of the Armed Forces. Many give thanks to their Subiaco experience that helped prepare them for the challenges of a military life.

The Subiaco Academy Alumni Hall of Veterans was created with the simple goal of honoring the bravery, service, and sacrifice of our Subiaco brothers. If you or someone you know has served in military who is a graduate of or ever attended Subiaco Academy, please send a brief biography and service photo to tcanada@subi.org so that we might add them to our digital wall of honorees.

To view the work in progress, visit <https://alumni.subiacoacademy.us/page/hall-of-veterans>. Please note that this platform is only visible to alumni of Subiaco Academy AND only to approved, registered users. To register please contact Alumni Relations Director, **Tom Canada '09**, at tcanada@subi.org or text 479-438-3695.



John-Rex Spivey '09
United States Navy

"There is not a day that goes by that I am not grateful for the opportunity to have attended Subiaco. As a Naval Officer, I have had leadership challenges in which I relied most heavily on my Subiaco roots."

Lieutenant John-Rex Spivey '09, *United States Navy*

Upcoming Retreats and Events at Coury House

January

- Dec. 31-1 New Year's Evening of Recollection
- 6-8 Arkansas Knights of Columbus
State Organizational Meeting
- 8-13 Holy Trinity Seminary Retreat
- 15-17 Leadership Team Retreat,
Memorial Drive Church of Christ, Tulsa, OK
- 21-23 Diocese of Tulsa Diaconate Retreat
- 27-30 Dr. Gary J. Oliver, Going Deeper Together

February

- 3-5 Knights of Columbus, Gainesville, TX
- 4 Evening with the Monks
- 7-9 Sacred Heart of Jesus Women's Retreat
- 10-12 The Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem Retreat
- 10-12 Worldwide Marriage Encounter
- 17-19 Subiaco Men's Retreat, sponsored by St. Joseph in Conway
- 22-24 Catholic School Administrators Retreat,
Diocese of Dallas, TX
- 24-26 Catholic Campus Ministry of Conway, AR
- 24-27 Dr. Gary J. Oliver, Going Deeper Together

March

- 3-5 Subiaco Academy Parents Weekend & Carnival
- 7 Lenten Day of Recollection
- 10-12 Diocesan Council of Black Catholics
- 10-12 Word of God Easter Retreat, St. Joseph's, Fayetteville, AR
- 13-16 Dr. Gary J. Oliver, Going Deeper Together
- 17-19 Arkansas Knights of Columbus Couples Retreat
- 24-26 4th Degree Arkansas Knights of Columbus Exemplification
- 13-16 Dr. Gary J. Oliver, Going Deeper Together
- 30-Apr. 2 Tulsa Lenten Retreat



All guests, either private or on group retreats, are welcome to join the monastic community for daily prayer and Eucharist.

For more information or for reservations, either call the Coury House at 479-934-1290 or email couryhouse@subi.org

Upcoming events may be found on our website, www.countrymonks.org