Virtuous Leadership

Most Catholics are familiar with Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI’s stirring insight, “The world promises you comfort, but you were not made for comfort. You were made for greatness.” But what is greatness? And how does one become great? Jeff Lockert, president of Catholic Christian Outreach since 2001 and an authorized teacher of the Virtuous Leadership system founded by Alex Havard, gave us some answers as he led the annual major seminary workshop this year.

Virtuous Leadership is “a systematic and holistic approach to leadership from the point of view of aretology, which is the science of the virtues developed by the Ancient Greeks. (It is) personal excellence (arete) and effectiveness in action (virtus) placed at the service of others for the achievement of great aspirations; to be excellent in character and to bring out greatness in others.” On this basis, we took some time to know ourselves better by understanding our God-given temperaments, whether choleric, melancholic, sanguine, or phlegmatic. These natural dispositions are gifts which incline us toward certain virtues but also leave us with areas of weakness. We took an online temperament quiz and when most of the seminarians revealed that they were melancholic or phlegmatic by nature, one of the few sanguines blurted out, “No wonder the seminary is so boring!” (N.B. “Boring” in this case probably means “lacking in a multitude of spontaneous practical jokes”).

Even though we are endowed with particular temperaments, we are not defined by them. We can exercise our free will to build a solid character of virtue upon this natural foundation. With inspiring stories of great people, fruitful group discussions, challenges to make practical personal goals, and moments of heartfelt prayer, Jeff helped us to do just that. He encouraged us to dream big and he kindled our desire to answer the call to greatness through the imitation of Christ. May God bless the work He has begun in us and may He bring many more people to greatness through Jeff’s ministry.

If you’d like to take the temperament quiz, go to https://www.temperamentquiz.com/login.

Jeff Lockert, President of Catholic Christian Outreach
Brother David Whelan 1926-2019

Brother David was of Newfoundland stock, born in Placentia on July 19, 1926, and named Edward Anthony Whelan. He was the son of Edward and Anne (née Roche) Whelan, of Kilbride, St. John’s West, Newfoundland.

His father served as the Assistant Chief-of-Police of the Newfoundland Constabulary from 1950-55, “an excellent example of applicability and fidelity to his responsibilities, both in civic life and as regards his role of family – provider.” His mother, in his words, “from start to finish – she lived to almost 90 – was especially loved and revered by all for her own genuine love, her attentiveness to all our needs within and without the household.” He had three brothers and one sister, all older than he. Edward Jr. received his first schooling from the Mercy Sisters at Placentia. In St. John’s he attended St. Patrick’s School and graduated from Grade 12 under the Irish Christian Brothers at St. Bonaventure’s College.

Beginning in 1953, he continued his higher studies for three years with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate at Arnprior, Ontario. Before leaving St. John’s, Edward had been a clerk during four years with the Unemployment Insurance Commission and had also received training for several years as an apprentice electrician.

Having discerned that God might be calling him to contemplative life, he entered Westminster Abbey in 1956. His years of formation culminated on March 25, 1961 when Abbot Eugene Medved received his perpetual vows. Summarizing his monastic life he once wrote, “As regards my monastic life, I can honestly report experiencing a genuine contentment and happiness, trusting that God who is infinitely merciful, ‘will supply what is lacking in our human frailty.’

From the time of his coming he made himself available to the many needs of the community. During his first four years he worked as a bricklayer, carpenter, tile-setter and gardener; but his principal and favourite duty was the care of the high altar in the Abbey Church and
the nine other altars in the upper cloister, in the days before the liturgical reform. He was a gifted speaker and had a formidable memory for poetry, Shakespeare and Newfoundland literature and song. A dramatic flair and Irish wit made him a favourite with the guests and seminarians. With his gift of writing he contributed for years to the PAX REGIS columns “With the Brothers” and the “Alumnitems.” He was reliable and always had a sense of humour. He did the first electrical work on our main barn. Another steady job in the community was the candle making which he kept up for over forty years. Brother was a generous, faithful worker in the Abbey kitchen, peeling potatoes, washing dishes and the floor and doing any other work assigned to him. For years too, he worked in the library putting away books. He was intelligent and loved to read.

When the Abbey Church was under construction, Brother was among the monks who helped to grind down the uneven concrete left after the forms were stripped from the walls. He loved assisting with preparing guests for the liturgy and would take pains to see that all their needs were met.

God worked powerfully, albeit painfully, in Brother David’s life in the monastery. He could easily be triggered into feeling isolated and would seek attention in unusual ways. He carried an emotional and psychic wound which only began to heal in the last months of his life. He wanted communion and friendship but did not know how to cultivate these effectively. Towards the latter part of his life when he was confined to the infirmary and to his bed, this side of his personality came more fully into focus. In a difficult moment when a Brother assistant assured him, “We love you,” he replied, “I am beginning to believe it!” Brother challenged the community and the abbot to find ways to love genuinely. In the last few months he could only receive, and through the monks’ care of him, they grew in bonds of fruitful self-giving. Surrounded by many confreres praying by his bedside, Brother David died in peace on December 14, 2019.
On May 26, 2020 our Brother Maurus de Klerk quietly passed to the Lord shortly after having undergone some tests in the hospital. His death was unexpected; we were waiting for him to return home to the abbey when the Lord had a different home in mind. Much to our sorrow, Brother Maurus did not have the comfort of our presence when he died. However, in faith we know he was not alone. The Good Shepherd knows where his sheep lie and how to rescue them!

Brother Maurus was born into a frugal, middle class family on 22 April, 1929 and named Peter Leo; his parents were Hubertus and Carolina (née Dykman) de Klerk. His father was a physical education teacher and had great hopes for his eldest son, but could not be reconciled to Peter’s call to be a Benedictine Brother, “Monks are not practical and brothers only go half way.” Providentially, Brother’s support came from the priests who encouraged him.

Born and raised in Delft, Netherlands, he enjoyed many of the town’s strong traditions. In his memoirs he recalled, “One duty of the teachers was to hear whether we memorized the Peter Canisius Catechism! Yes, beginning in Grade 3. Also from Grade 3 on we would receive on a weekly basis a class in Gregorian Chant (Gregorian drill!) Our headmaster was sold on it. The Easter Mass, [which] in those days was on early Saturday morning, was sung by 120 children with only the text in front of them. There was a rich liturgical life in the parish which I absorbed more by routine and drill than awareness and faith. But it did stick.” Brother loved the liturgy and the liturgical rhythm of the community. In his last weeks he was often upset that he missed Lauds or Mass due to health reasons.

From 1942 to 1947 Brother attended the Franciscan College in Rotterdam. Not given to academics, he applied to a vocational training school which required a city boy to spend a year on a farm. The Snelders family gave him a hearty welcome into their home and introduced him to the daily recitation of the Rosary with the Fatima prayer at the end. “This was a beautiful year of adjustment,” he remembered. In 1950 there followed one and half years of conscripted service in the army; after which, without much reflection, he decided to emigrate to Canada in 1954.

Before leaving for the airport, he had a last look at the parish complex and in the depths of his heart made a
prophetic statement: “I will never return here.” He never did.

Shortly after arriving in Vancouver, B.C., he noticed a poster in Holy Rosary Cathedral promoting the abbey and seminary. His parish priest arranged an interview with Abbot Eugene in August 1955 and a week later he entered for good. Brother often said that the greatest gift Abbot Eugene gave him was accepting him into the community. In his own words, “the abbey provided me with a family to live with and a structure I was in need of. Idleness was a great problem for me.” Knowing his weakness, Brother often voiced his conviction that if he had remained in the world he would have been lost. He loved the community and served his confreres in simple ways.

For almost as long as his years of profession, Brother honed his talents in gardening and book binding. But he also carried out many other daily tasks for decades. One of the longest jobs was being weather station observer for 41 years. He was part of the milking crew which milked the abbey cows twice a day. (The last cow of the dairy herd was sold in 1991.) His daily work included vacuuming the guesthouse and cleaning sinks, working as part of the kitchen and table setting crews, caring for houseplants and creating flower arrangements for the Abbey Church. One of the more hidden jobs he had was restringing the chairs in the monastic recreation room. Brother exemplified unassuming fidelity. He also took his turn frequently as porter at the guesthouse entrance.

A simple but sensitive man, friendly and regular, Brother had a great love for the family. It was not uncommon to hear him pray “for holiness in the Christian family” during the Prayer of the Faithful, or to see him perk up when confreres or guests shared stories about their own family life.

While burdened with several health issues, Brother was nonetheless a willing worker in the Lord’s vineyard for 63 years of professed monastic life. We are thankful to God that he has now at last arrived where he longed for many years to go.
Ordination

One of the things delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic is the priestly ordination of Dominic Sternhagen, now a deacon for the Salt Lake City Diocese. Dominic was born in Austin, TX in 1985 and was homeschooled. He entered the Minor Seminary here in 1999 and left in 2004 after completing high school. His two younger brothers, Nikolas and Michael, also attended the Minor Seminary for one or more years. After leaving our seminary all three entered the Legionaries of Christ, primarily in Cheshire, CT. While in the Legionaries for 12 years, Dominic received the degrees of Ph.B (Baccalauréate in Philosophy), and Lic.Phil. (Licentiate in Philosophy), both from the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum in Rome. From Mount Angel Seminary in Oregon he received an MA (Master’s Degree in Theology), S.T.B. (Bachelor of Sacred Theology) and an M.Div. degree (Master of Divinity).

Dominic’s father, Donald, is also an alumnus of SCK, having attended here 1980–83. He and his wife, Mimi, have five children, with Dominic being the eldest.

God willing, Dominic will be ordained to the priesthood on Friday, August 14th, in the Cathedral of the Madeleine by Bishop Oscar A. Solis of the Salt Lake City Diocese.

Dominic was Dean of Studies at the Legionary Novitiate in Dublin, Ireland, where he was English teacher, choir leader, and Latin and Greek tutor, among other things.

At Mount Angel Seminary, where he has studied for the past four years, he was Ecumenical and Interfaith Chair for two years, and President of the Student Body this past year.

He did pastoral work in St Andrew’s Parish in Riverton, in Christ the King Parish in Cedar City, in Notre Dame in Price, and St. Mary’s in West Haven Utah.

“My most significant experience as a seminarian,” he writes, “was perhaps the election of Pope Francis, in no small part because I had the grace to be there. That Tuesday, the second day of the conclave, I guessed would be the day he was elected, so rather than going to classes, I camped out in St. Peter’s Square from 10 a.m. until his election at 7 p.m. The smoke came – it was grey, no, white, and then everyone was running. I was close under the balcony in that atmosphere of joyful expectation, and then he appeared! No one had any idea who he was, but whoever he was, he radiated simplicity and humility, and in these characteristics, as well as his perpetual joy, he has been an inspiration and a model for me. His first action as pope was to ask for prayers for Pope Benedict XVI, and I see this as very significant, as I have always seen a great continuity between the two.”

We wish Dominic many years in the Lord's service.
January 2020

5: We returned back from the Christmas break in time for first Vespers of the Solemnity of the Epiphany, which most of us had already celebrated that morning at our parishes.

17-19: All the seminarians went to Deacon Richard Conlin’s family house in Whistler for a ski/snowmobile trip. The temperature was perfect and we enjoyed a fresh dump of snow on the mountains. We enjoyed the opportunity to cook, relax in the sauna and go window shopping in the Village.

Jan. 29 - Feb. 2: Our annual silent retreat was led by Fr. Murray Kuemper, a priest of Madonna House who teaches moral theology at St. Peter’s Seminary in London, Ontario.

February 2020

7-9: Our final Vocation Live-in for the year saw 7 guys coming from Vancouver, Kamloops and Edmonton.

24: Our annual Lundi Gras dinner featured fried chicken and waffles, which is actually a pretty good combo.

March 2020

12-16: Seminarians depart for what turned out to be a rather dramatic home weekend. With the outbreak of Covid-19 in BC our formators decided to suspend studies at the SCK. We returned Sunday night, celebrated a school-closing Mass in one of our classrooms on Monday morning and departed before lunch. We continued our studies online from home.

Completion of New Sacristy

The completion of the new sacristy was reached in May without fanfare or attention and, perhaps, this is fitting for a building that has the quiet purpose of storing vestments and other liturgical paraphernalia. The project took two years to complete but the humble beauty of the edifice, consonant with that of the Abbey Church, was worth the wait.

The community is full of gratitude for the steadfast work of the architect, Denis Bruneau, and the numerous craftsmen who competently and faithfully plied their trades. Numerous monks were also involved: Father Leo assisted with the communication end of the project; Father Joseph excavated the site; later, Brother Joseph and the junior monks roofed the structure and installed the wooden ceiling panels.
January 2020
The middle of January was particularly memorable for the SY seminarians, as temperatures dropped to -20 degrees Celsius with wind chill. Along with those temperatures came many, many, many inches of snow. Which, obviously, meant that the SY seminarians, in between classes, prayer, and reading, spent time outside carving multi-roomed snow tunnels complete with attempted archways for structural support. We could have done a couple Lectio Divina sessions in there, comfortably!

18: The first thing that marked the Spirituality Year in the second semester was a Marian Conference at which they helped, at Canadian Martyrs Parish in Richmond, BC. After spending some time getting Jeremy’s car out of the frozen tundra that was the Seminary of Christ the King, the SY seminarians arrived at the parish, MC’d, promoted things at the store, and were personal guides for the guest speakers, who came from places such as the Southern US, and even Poland.

February 2020
3-28: Part of the Spirituality Year program is a month-long Discipleship Immersion Experience (yes, the acronym is DIE). The phrase around the Nazareth House as the month approached was, “Are you getting ready to die?” Which again, given the 5-day retreat, was very much the point of February 2020: to make a gift of yourself and put others before yourself, trusting in God even in the discomfort of various situations.

Two of the SY seminarians were sent to L’Arche Greater Vancouver, to live with, support, help, guide, and be friends to those living with developmental disabilities (called the ‘Core Members’) in a spirit of love and belonging. The seminarians were a part of meal time prep, community prayer, various group outings, and helping Core Members with local projects (rebuilding fences, shoveling snow, food delivery, etc.) in a program called Neighbours Helping Neighbours.

The other two SY seminarians were sent to help at the Men’s Hostel in Vancouver’s Down-
town Eastside. They got up close and personal with the homeless coming to the hostel each night, learning about them and their stories, their lives, their struggles. The seminarians also visited many other soup kitchens, hostels, and shelters to lend a hand to the various groups, including The Door is Open.

April 2020

11-12: He is Risen! This Easter Vigil and Sunday took on some special significance - we were some of the only lay people in the diocese able to attend the liturgical celebration of the Solemnity of the Resurrection in person. It was also an end of sorts to our isolation; we joined the monks for post-vigil celebrations in the Majors’ dining room, which included homemade beef jerky! After that, we went back to the Nazareth House where Fr. Hien had cooked Congee (a Chinese savoury rice porridge)...at 1:30am. Happy Easter!

13: Easter Monday BBQ. Today, we simply continued to celebrate Easter with good food, especially because we were getting ready to begin our 8-day silent retreat the next day. We enjoyed a delicious BBQ of steak, salad, potatoes, mushrooms, and homemade ginger beer!

14-21: These 8 days really were the culmination of an entire year of human and spiritual formation. Having done our best to honestly look at our pasts, our wounds, our sins, our experiences, our hopes, our desires, and our love for God, we entered into a very intense 8-day Ignatian silent retreat, led by Fr. Richard Soo, SJ. Something happens when you have to separately and silently meditate and pray using only your life and assigned Scripture, in four 1-hour prayer periods over 8 days. It was an intense discovery and deepening of what it means for the Real Self to meet the Real God. Fr. Richard helped all of us to push aside our too-often cognitive shields, and guided us to look at, wrestle with, and ultimately rest in our own hearts - thereby truly resting in God, a God whose first act is not to heal us, but simply to say, “I know this is difficult. But I’m here with you, and I love you.” More than one of the seminarians said that it was the best retreat he had ever been on. One said that it was among the best 8 days of his life.

21: On the evening of April 21st, after 8 days of no communicating, no “thinking work,” no extra reading, and not even any other prayers besides what Fr. Richard assigned to us...WE COULD TALK. And talk we did. And eat. To celebrate the end of the retreat as well as the year, we hosted all of our formators: Frs. Abbot, Hien, Matthew, Joseph, Leo, Anthony, as well as Kevin and Mary Reese all joined us for an amazing steak BBQ dinner. It was a great way to officially wrap up.
January 2020
5: With a mixture of excitement and melancholy, the Minors returned to the Seminary from their Christmas break in time for First Vespers of the Epiphany.

6: Solemnity of the Epiphany. No classes! The Minors held their traditional gift exchange in the evening.

7: The return to the usual routine of things is often difficult after breaks, but perhaps most rocky after our longest break, the Christmas one. However, we soon slipped into the familiar (yet not blasé) schedule.

10: With snow outside, the Minors planned a spectacular ambush of the Majors after lunch. Everything was ready, including the camera. Unfortunately, the Majors walked through the building. So the Minors dropped plan A and just went on the offensive with snowballs as soon as they came out into the parking lot. The Majors ignored them, until Lorenzo was pelted on the ear with a snowball. His baseball pitching skills then showed themselves as he proceeded to take out our best guys one after another.

11: We finally got a really good snowfall! Many of the younger seminarians (and Brother Maximus) spent the afternoon building a snow fort so as (this time successfully) to ambush the Majors when they go by. In the process, another snowball fight broke out; this time Lorenzo threw one so hard it broke the window!

30: The Minors began their silent retreat today led by Fr. Caesarius, and which will end on the coming Sunday. These times of recollection are like brief re-charging stations, where we may rest safely from the warfare of life to be renewed; and then sally forth once again to do battle.

February 2020
2: The Minors’ silent retreat ended after Holy Mass for the Feast of the Presentation. We have grown (hopefully) in grace and wisdom, and now is our chance to fight even harder in the war for our souls.

7: The Vocations Live-in began tonight, and will end on Sunday after Holy Mass. Not every boy who attends the Live-in will return later for the Seminary, but God always uses these times for their spiritual growth, and even plants the seeds of vocation for some. There were three boys with the name John Paul here, including our Juan Pablo.

13: We went for a cultural day in Vancouver, visiting the Planetarium and the Maritime Museum.

14: The Minors departed for a Home Weekend, returning to the Abbey on the following Monday. These weekends are golden opportunities to bring the graces of seminary life to our
families, strengthening the whole family.

26: Ash Wednesday! The holy season of Lent is the ultimate time for us finally to expel that little vice we’ve always ignored, or decapitate that big fault once and for all. Every minor can offer up something during this season, but it doesn’t always have to be a dessert: some of them offer up the struggles of their daily classes for the salvation of souls.

March 2020

4: The corona virus is coming closer to home. We have now had to empty our holy water fonts in the church.

9: On the topic of sacrifices, third term exams began today, and will end on the following Thursday (12th). For some, these few days are an exciting challenge; for others they are simply a challenge. Yet for every boy, these few days are a chance to grow as a young man, as a class, and as a seminary.

11: This morning Father Peter offered Mass for the minors in our chapel, since some vandals had broken into the church and sprayed fire extinguishers everywhere. Later in the morning, many of us participated in cleaning up the church.

12: Third term exams ended today, much to some boys’ relief, and to others’ dismay. Everybody left for yet another home weekend except for four seminarians. Yet this weekend turned out to be not so normal... several of the Americans had to turn back at the US border, because the virus outbreak is very serious in Washington state.

14: Due to the restrictions over the virus, it looks like the rest of the seminarians won’t be able to return. Nobody planned for this, and almost everybody left many of his things at the seminary.

21: Solemnity of Saint Benedict. There are now only four seminarians at the seminary: Felix, Peter, Paul, and Alarick; they have all obtained permission to stay here for the rest of the year. Seminary life and classes will continue, but some things will be different. For one, they are rising with the monks for Lauds, and staying up with them for Vigils.

24: Classes have resumed, and several of the teachers have been going online for their classes. All of the seminarians seem to be doing well, and most of us are now with our families.
A typical “With the Brothers” article features a written collage of work-oriented snapshots designed to expose some prominent features of our daily monastic life. However, as changes in daily life multiply with the multiplication of the coronavirus, perhaps it would be appropriate to change our typical approach to this article. Hence, let us turn our gaze from the brothers’ exterior works to an interior work which they labour at “unceasingly day and night” in the workshop which is “the enclosure of the monastery and stability in community” (RB Ch. 4). What is this work? It is the spiritual craft of being formed according to Christ by means of the seventy-two instruments of good works listed in chapter four of the Holy Rule of St. Benedict.

To begin, the unworthy author of this article vehemently attests to the monks’ admirable use of both Instrument 34, “Not to be proud,” and Instrument 67, “To beware of haughtiness,” for, when he asked the brothers to pen a short write up regarding their employment in this field of work, he received only one forthcoming reply from a considerate confrere which, incidentally, happened to relate a rather unflattering incident. Undaunted by this lack of forthcoming matter with which to compose an article, the author proceeded to derive what matter he could through observation and interrogation. Results soon materialized. After pressing a brother for some input, the latter remarked that Instrument 3, “Not to murder,” is perfectly and perennially employed in our community. We are proud to say, err, humble to say that our community’s history has been unmarked by any Vicovarian attempts at abbicide even from day one in 1939. (In case you are not yet educated in Benedictine lore, St. Gregory recounts in his Dialogues how the monks of Vicovaro attempted to murder St. Benedict).

The same brother, Br. Joseph by name, thought Instrument 5, “Not to steal” was another Westminster Abbey favourite. Unfortunately, it has come to our attention that our cooks-in-training, Br. Paschasius and Br. Joshua, were reprimanded for pilfering leftovers from their college campus. We mustn’t judge them too harshly though. Their inclination to monastic frugality had led them to presume permission for bringing home what was destined for the garbage. (The school’s concern was that if gastronomical items destined for the garbage were taken by students, students might
be inclined to make as many gastronomical items destined for the garbage as they possibly could).

It has also come to our attention that, from the Baptism of our Lord until Easter, Br. Joseph has been fitting our postulants, David and Isaac, with a spiritual toolbox for their gainful employment in the community. How has he done this? By wielding Instrument 69, “To love the juniors,” and giving them a daily fifteen minute conference on each instrument. We hope that these conferences will bear fruit in a spiritual stature which matches and even surpasses the vertical stature they now possess. (Both postulants are well over 6 feet tall.)

It is just an observation, but it seems as though Br. Isidore struggles with Instrument 56, “To listen willingly to holy reading,” because every Sunday, the day most privileged for holy reading, he can be found working from dawn to dusk feeding the cows, vesting P. Dunstan, sanitizing door handles ... and the list goes on. Then again, it may be that he is actually exercising Instrument 59, “to hate one’s own will” and is vigorously denying his desire to read from dawn to dusk.

Mentioning Br. Isidore’s job of sanitizing door handles has reminded us that all the monks are cooperating in the common cause of preventing the spread of COVID-19. Because they are not detracting from this cause, we may safely say that all the monks, in one way or another, are practicing instrument 40, “Not to be a detractor.” To give some examples, Br. Luke and David join Br. Isidore in sanitizing commonly touched things twice daily. Br. John wears coveralls when he picks up food donations so that he can take off the possibly infected coveralls on his return and store them in a safe place to decontaminate. Br. Meinrad and P. Nicholas are setting our tables according to a new sanitary meal system which the refectorian, Frater Athanasius, helped to contrive.

The kitchen workers, who make it difficult to practice Instrument 36, “Not to be a great eater,” welcomed this change. Why? Some forty odd years ago, Br. Benedict was nearly chased out of the abbatial office when he asked if food could be served from common containers rather than from a whole slew of serving bowls in what is termed “family style”. According to the new system, it was decided that it would be best if the waiters served the food from common containers so that there would be no need for the brethren who are eating to handle the common serving utensils, which may facilitate the spreading of germs. Finally, Br. Emeric, and Br. Gregory, along with all the other monks, are diligently washing their hands throughout the day.

Perhaps it is time to attend to the generous input of the abovementioned considerate confere. He begins his account: “There must be no murmuring in the monastery” (cf. Instrument 39, “Not to be a grumbler”). We may presume that in the trying events of the following narration, this dear brother, who happens to be Br. Maximus, did not grumble at all. We quote well-nigh verbatim:

It was a sunny day, so Brother cheerfully took the chainsaw out to cut up some fallen trees. Now
there was a big birch leaning out of the forest, a bit too high to reach, and resting on another fallen tree. “I’ll cut it at the base” he reasonably thought. And as he did, the tree leaned the other way and pinched the chainsaw fast. So brother went off to get another chainsaw and eventually returned. ‘I’ll have to cut it piece-meal’ he thought as he carefully climbed out onto the leaning tree (carefully because he had no permission to kill himself and he was an ardent practitioner of Instrument 60: “To obey in all things the commands of the Abbot”). RRRRR-FLAP!!!! The chain flew off. Another while went by and brother returned with the tractor and a big chain. ‘I’ll pull on the tree. That should loosen the first chainsaw’ he reckoned. Now this sunny day had been the first in a long while (as is often the case in this inundated region) and since the ground was still soaked the tractor tires did nothing but spin in the mud as he was pulling uphill. “Okay, I’ll pull downhill” thought the brother. And so he did. …. Creak …. “Victory!” thought he as the chainsaw came loose. He leaped off the tractor and proceeded to finish off this troublesome tree but, after the saw cut through the trunk like a knife through butter and the tree had fallen with a thud, the tractor started to gleefully roll down the hill. (Our dear brother had forgotten the brake). With a leap and a dash he pursued the fleeing tractor which finally gave up its flight since it was dragging a heavy tree. When he returned to the monastery, brother, feeling slightly defeated, left the chainsaw on a table. The saw was soon fixed by Br. Bartholomew who knows how to dexterously handle Instrument 38, “Not to be lazy.”

To conclude this anecdote, we might mention that our dear brother’s adaptation of Instrument 39, “Not to be a grumbler” with “There must be no murmuring in the monastery” does not refer to the fact that he kept his grumbling for the outdoors. Further, because monks are jacks-of-all-trades but masters at none, incidents resembling this anecdote of our considerate confrere are commonplace in the monastery. Perhaps it is God’s way of satisfying the zeal for humiliations which we purportedly had in our novitiate (cf. RB Ch. 58). Perhaps it is also the brothers’ fondness for Instrument 20, “To become a stranger to the world’s ways.”

We have already reached our quota of words but have related nothing more than a dusting of snow on the top of an iceberg regarding the brothers’ interior labour with the instruments of good works. The brothers have most certainly employed these invaluable tools in many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the Titanic in its prime would not have room for the articles that would have to be contained in it.
Priest alumni who are celebrating jubilees of ordination this year include, in the Vancouver archdiocese:

Fr Nicholas Ruh, OSB, diamond jubilee on December 17th.

Fr. James Comey, golden jubilee on May 9th.

Msgr. Dennis Luterbach, golden jubilee on May 16th.

Fr. Augustine Obiwumma, silver jubilee on December 8th.

Fr. Philip Van Tinh Le, in the Calgary diocese, silver jubilee on August 4th.

To all our jubilarians we wish Ad multos annos!

Changes in the Vancouver archdiocese, effective August 13, include: as pastors: Fathers Edwin Kulling '10, to St. Luke’s, Maple Ridge; Mark McGuckin ’16, to St. Joseph’s, Port Moody; and Thomas Smith ’03, to St. Paul’s, Richmond.

As assistant pastors: Fathers Juan Lucca, ’17, to St Mary’s, Chilliwack; Pablo Santa Maria, ’12, to Holy Rosary Cathedral; Giovanni Schiesari, ’17, to St Joseph’s, Langley.

Msgr Dennis Luterbach, ’70, is retiring.

Fr. Francesco Voltaggio, ’17, is on leave for studies.

Deacon Richard Conlin ’20, to Corpus Christi Parish, Vancouver.

Requiescant in pace:

Fr. Norman Schurter, OCSO, ’81 of Our Lady of the Prairies Trappist Monastery at Holland, Manitoba died at the age of 87 years on August 17, 2015. We learned of his death earlier this year.

Fr. Fred Büttner, ’01, of the Vancouver Archdiocese, died on April 4, 2020, aged 60. Paul Pearson, oblate of our monastery, died April 1, 2020 in Victoria.

Dennis Gibson, a former neighbour of ours, died April 21, 2020 in his home in Chilliwack.