



Photo by Cole McCoy '19

# Michaeleen

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SPRING 2020



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**NIGHT OF KNIGHTS**  
March 28th, 2020

**ATHLETICS BANQUET (HALL OF FAME)**  
May 17th, 2020

**GOLF CLASSIC**  
June 5th, 2020

**ALL CLASS ALUMNI REUNION**  
June 6th, 2020

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on Mount Michael!*



Mount Michael Benedictine School



@Mount\_Michael



Mount Michael Benedictine

## IN REMEMBRANCE

**Kristi Coughlin**, mother of Mickey Coughlin '15

**Dick Dunning**, grandfather of Steve Dunning '06

**Timothy McReynolds**, brother of Fr. Eugene McReynolds

**Greg Hall**, uncle of Nick Hall '07

**Wilma Crilly**, wife of William (Bill) Crilly '61

**Marie Paschang**, friend of Mount Michael

**Seth Witulski '08**

**Terrence O'Hare**, father of Michael O'Hare '93

**Dr Thomas O'Keefe**, father of Joseph O'Keefe '85 and Daniel O'Keefe '90, and grandfather of Isaac Gart '21

**James Sullivan**, grandfather of Greg Sullivan '06 and Eric Sullivan '15

**Frank Bemis**, friend of Mount Michael

**Robert Carlson**, grandfather of Tim Carlson '10

**Cecilia Galagan**, grandmother of Br. August Schaefer



# Letter from the Abbot

When I was a novice in the monastery, we traveled to northwest Missouri to Conception Abbey, the founding monastery of Mount Michael Abbey, on Emmaus Day. For those unfamiliar, the gospel of Luke tells the story of two disciples fleeing Jerusalem following the crucifixion of Jesus. On their way to the village of Emmaus, they meet a stranger. Eventually in the breaking of the bread they recognize their fellow traveler as the risen Christ. A visit to another monastery was a loose commemoration of Emmaus Day.

At Conception, we spent part of the day relaxing along the Platte River. We had a picnic and played some volleyball. On the way back to the abbey for vespers, I got dumped out of the back end of the pickup in which we were riding. But that is a story for another day. One of the young monks at Conception whom we met was Gregory Polan – later to become the Abbot Primate of Benedictines worldwide. A few later years later, when Fr. John and I were theology students at St. John’s Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, we met Gregory again. He was, like us, a theology student.

Impressions of Abbot Gregory from our days at St. John’s. He was a devoted student with an interest in the Old Testament. He was an organist. He had a serious demeanor, but also knew how to enjoy himself. I had the good fortune to spend one semester with him in Jerusalem. As with most of our classmates, he reveled in absorbing the experience of life and study in the Holy Land. He composed a piece while there which we often sing in chapel here during Easter time. Most importantly, I realized that while Abbot Gregory had a framework out of which he worked and made decisions, he appreciated that others might have different perspectives. He was always open to learning from the frameworks which gave shape to the behavior and decisions of others.

After theology, Abbot Gregory was ordained and became a professor at Conception Seminary. He continued his scriptural studies as well as continuing to compose music. Fr. John and I stayed in touch with Abbot Gregory throughout these years. In 1996, he was elected to be abbot of Conception Abbey. He worked on a translation of the psalms which was eventually approved for liturgical use.

After I was elected abbot of Mount Michael Abbey, I crossed paths regularly with Abbot Gregory at yearly workshops for abbots in North America. Every four years all the abbots from around the world also meet at Sant’Anselmo Abbey in Rome, the headquarters for Benedictine confederations and the home of the Abbot Primate. In 2016, the term of Abbot Notker Wolf as Abbot Primate had expired. So the abbots’ congress of 2016 had to elect a new Abbot Primate. Four years earlier, in 2012, there had already been speculation that Abbot Gregory might be a candidate for the position. He was not elected that year, but he was chosen in 2016.

The Abbot Primate has many responsibilities. The athaneum of Sant’Anselmo hosts the Pontifical Institute for Sacred Liturgy, as well as a philosophy and theology school. The Abbot Primate is the head of the monastic community made up of teachers and students from other Benedictine monasteries. Many Benedictine communities in the West have been declining in numbers, but many Benedictine houses in Africa and Asia are growing quickly. The Abbot Primate facilitates contacts among various monasteries, supports their missions and often visits many of them himself. The complex at Sant’Anselmo was designed and built about 1900. The buildings require upkeep and maintenance which can be costly. Those and other challenges keep the Abbot Primate a busy man.

This year marks fifty years for Mount Michael Benedictine School, the successor to St. John Seminary. We wanted to mark such a special occasion. Thanks to the efforts of Fr. John and his friendship with Abbot Gregory, the Abbot Primate will join us to celebrate the Eucharist on the feast of St. Benedict in March. Not Emmaus Day, but a perfect occasion to have a distinguished guest. It is generous of him to take the time to celebrate the feast of St Benedict with us. I am sure that the students and staff will be impressed with him. And we promise not to dump him out of the back end of a pickup.



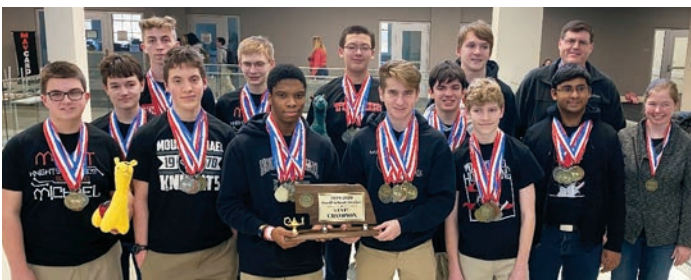
*Michael Liebl, OSB*



# Head of School ● ●

## I want to share some of our student accomplishments of the 2019-2020 school year!

- Our **Academic Decathlon Team** won their seventh consecutive state championship at UNO in February, besting all schools in their division. The team consisted of **Addison Cousin-Hardrick '20**, **Tucker Cudmore '22**, **David Drews '22**, **Matthew Geary '21**, **Jack Giitter '22**, **Andrew Hartin '22**, **Michael Kremer '20**, **Sam Lund '22**, **William Mallisee '22**, **Michael Mullin '22**, **Tharein Potuhera '20**, and **Luke Wooten '22**. The team will participate in the on-line national championship later this spring. Congratulations to coaches Mr. David Cormier and Ms. Eileen Sullivan!



### ACADEMIC DECATHLON TEAM

- **Brayden Whitaker '20** scored a perfect 36 on the **ACT exam** this year. Congratulations!!

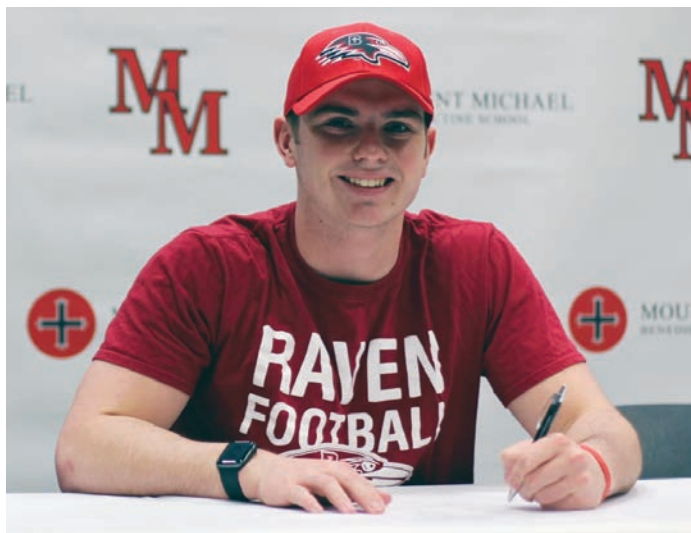
- The **Journalism students** attended the national JEA/NSPA Convention in Washington, D.C. in November. Five Knights were honored for outstanding work: superiors were awarded to **Jacob Gathje '20** in sports writing and **Alex Schrier '20** in news editing/headlines. **Daniel Thomas '21** received an excellent in infographics, and honorable mention went to **Mason Matukewicz '20** in yearbook cover and end sheets and **Brayden Whitaker '20** in news writing.

- At the annual **UNL Math day** in November, the largest mathematics competition in the state, Mount Michael placed first on the PROBE I written competition in their division. Two Knights placed in the top forty of more than 1,300 students who participated. Congratulations to **Michael Mullin '22** who placed 10th overall and **Huy Le '21** who placed 33rd overall. Congratulations to all participants and math department chair, Mr. Jason Mackeprang. Out of 16 years, Mount Michael has placed first in our division for 12 years and second in the other four years!

- **National Merit Scholarship Program**: Four Mount Michael seniors made it to the finalist stage of the National Merit Scholarship Program. About 15,000 students out of 1.6 million student who take the PSAT exam make it to the finalist stage. Congratulations to seniors **Jacob Gathje**, **Tharein Potuhera**, **Alexander Schrier** and **Brayden Whitaker**. Mount Michael also had two seniors honored as commended students: **Temi Davies** and **Alex Payne!**

- The **tennis team** finished as the Class B State Runner-Up. Congratulations to Coach Chase Peterson and the tennis team. The #1 singles state champion was **Isaac Gart '21**, #2 singles, **Will Mallisee '22** finished in second place; #1 doubles team, **Peyton Rosenfels '20** and **Ethan Pentel '22** finished third; and #2 doubles, **Alex Payne '20** and **Jose Castillo '23** finished second.

- **Calvin Benson '20** signed his **letter of intent to play football** at Benedictine College. Calvin's successes can be seen on and off the field. He is a member of the National Honor Society, was awarded Academic-All State for football, and has a cumulative GPA of 3.9.



CALVIN BENSON

• Thirty-four knights were recognized by the College Board as **Advanced Placement Scholars** for their achievement last spring on their AP exams. Congratulations to the following students:

**10 AP SCHOLARS**

- |                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>John Ackerman '20</b>   | <b>Jacob Gathje '20</b>   |
| <b>Nick Akers '19</b>      | <b>Ben Quinlan '20</b>    |
| <b>Jarrett Cline '19</b>   | <b>Alex Schrier '20</b>   |
| <b>Trevin Detwiler '19</b> | <b>Evan Schroder '20</b>  |
| <b>Shintaro Fujita '19</b> | <b>Henry Storbeck '20</b> |

**6 AP SCHOLARS WITH HONORS**

- |                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Donovan Clements '19</b> | <b>Carson Leahy '19</b> |
| <b>Sid deMayo '19</b>       | <b>Alex Payne '20</b>   |
| <b>Matthew Draper '19</b>   | <b>Sam Peters '19</b>   |

**18 AP SCHOLARS WITH DISTINCTION**

- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Temí Adeyemo '19</b>     | <b>Levi Kicken '19</b>      |
| <b>Jacob Benes '19</b>      | <b>Colin Mallisee '19</b>   |
| <b>Stefano Brunelli '19</b> | <b>Max Nguyen '19</b>       |
| <b>Patrick Collins '19</b>  | <b>Gerald Righter '19</b>   |
| <b>James Crotty '19</b>     | <b>Jacob Rapoza '19</b>     |
| <b>Daniel Davies '19</b>    | <b>Andrew Shellberg '19</b> |
| <b>Sam Eberle '19</b>       | <b>Brayden Whitaker '20</b> |
| <b>Patrick Fayad '19</b>    | <b>Kevin Zhang '19</b>      |
| <b>J.P. Jensen '19</b>      | <b>Nolan Zeger '19</b>      |

AP Scholar: score of 3 or higher on 3 or more AP Exams  
 AP Scholar with Honors: average of at least 3.25 on all exams taken and 3 or higher on 4 or more of these exams  
 AP Scholar with Distinction: average of 3.5 on all AP exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on 5 or more of these exams

• As of this writing the **class of 2020** has an overall composite ACT average of 28.9. This is one of the highest in the state of Nebraska! Congrats to the class of 2020!

Thank you for your continued support of Mount Michael Benedictine School. It has been a tremendous year for our students and staff. Being chosen as a Blue Ribbon School this year was also a crowning achievement. None of this would be possible without your continued support! I hope you all have a relaxing and rewarding summer!

God bless and take care,



David J. Peters, Ed.D.  
 Head of School



Greetings Mount Michael Community!

As any Mount Michael alumnus will tell you, the Mount Michael experience is only as good as the guys that you do it with. I wouldn't trade anything in the world for the memories I have with my brothers in the Class of 2013. I truly believe that

it is these stories that ultimately make a student decide to attend Mount Michael.

In the fall, I speak with over 500 eighth graders across the Omaha area about what the Mount Michael experience is like. They hear the benefits of a Mount Michael education. They hear the stories of current Mount Michael students and their journey through the Mount. They hear what it is like to live with the same group of guys for four years. Some of these students decide right away it may not be for them, whereas other may want to hear more. These are the students who decide to take a tour or attend a recruitment event. It is at these events that they are finally able to witness the stories that have been told to them. Over time, 500 eighth graders turn into 150 eighth graders. Through the winter and after shadowing at Mount Michael, 150 eighth graders turn into 90 eighth graders. The admissions funnel continues.

As we transition now from winter and into spring, we were finally able to sign the official letters of acceptance and invite 72 young men from the Omaha area to join the Mount Michael Class of 2024. Thirty-six of these students performed well enough on our entrance exam to be awarded a merit-based scholarship, which we presented to them in early February.

It is truly an exciting time for our community, and we have tremendous momentum moving into summer!

Proud to be a Knight,  
 Tom Maliszewski '13  
 Director of Admissions

**MOUNT MICHAEL BENEDICTINE  
 YOUTH SUMMER CAMPS 2020**



**SPORTS CAMPS**

<b>BASKETBALL- MAY 27-28</b>	<b>SOCCER- JUNE 11</b>
<b>BASEBALL- JUNE 1-3</b>	<b>FOOTBALL- JULY 13-15</b>
<b>WRESTLING- JUNE 9</b>	REGISTER AT <a href="http://WWW.MOUNTMICHAEL.COM">WWW.MOUNTMICHAEL.COM</a>

**5-DAY SUMMER CAMPS**

<b>WEEK 1 - JUNE 14-19</b>	<b>WEEK 2 - JUNE 21-26</b>
<b>WEEK 3 - JULY 5-10</b>	<b>WEEK 4 - JULY 12-17</b>
<b>WEEK 5 - JULY 19-24</b>	<b>COST PER WEEK- \$350</b>

VISIT [WWW.MOUNTMICHAEL.COM](http://WWW.MOUNTMICHAEL.COM) FOR MORE INFORMATION

# STUDENT NEWS

## BASKETBALL

The Mount Michael basketball team is headed to state after winning the B-6 District Final. This is the Knights' first trip to state since 2015.



Back: Coach Derrick Spooner, Stevie Spooner, Will Stringer '21, Matt Janecek '22, Charlotte Roshone, Coach John Roshone '99, Dylan Brown '22, Joe Chouinard '21, Brad Bennet '21, Jack Lorensen '21, Kyle Pelan '21, Kuon Kuon '21, Ethan Meduna '20, Kaleb Brink '21, Henry Storbek '20, Cliff Roepke '20, Phong Le '21, Jason Nyamatore '21, Andrew Lee '22, Coach John Mullen, Coach Jordan Dorsey '04, Coach Pat Hawk, Coach Matt Coghill '16; Front: Joe Bruggeman '21, Eli Crnkovich '21, Aaron Karnish '20, Airan Lopez '21, Parker Hottovy '21, Greg Gonzalez '20, Daniel Mondy '22, Aiden Brink '23, Huy Le '21



Joseph Johansen '20

## SWIMMING

The Skutt Catholic/Mount Michael Swim Team placed 21st overall at the state swim meet.

- **Joseph Johansen and Xavier Johansen**  
17TH IN THE 200 MEDLEY RELAY
- **Joseph Johansen**  
11TH IN THE 50 FREE (New School Record. 21.84)  
13TH IN THE 100 FREE
- **Joseph Johansen and Xavier Johansen**  
14TH IN THE 200 FREE RELAY
- **Brayden Whitaker**  
24TH IN THE 400 FREE RELAY



Jacob Gathje '20

## RIVER CITIES CONFERENCE

Jacob Gathje '20 was the River Cities Conference Champion in Persuasive Speaking. His presentation was about how Nebraska has to be prepared for the effects of climate change.

# Athletics Recognition Dinner

## May 17, 2020

### Coach Kane Court

We cordially invite you to our first annual Athletics recognition dinner on May 17, 2020, on Coach Kane Court. At this dinner we will recognize individual and team success from the 2019-2020 school year. We also will be recognizing the 12-season athletes, recognizing any records that were broken, all conference/all state players, and announcing the Athlete of the Year Award.

This event is headlined with the special induction of our inaugural class into the Mount Michael Athletics Hall of Fame.

We expect this dinner to be highly attended and wanted to get this date on your calendars as soon as possible. Later communication regarding this special night will follow and will include pricing in addition to RSVP information.

**Derrick Spooner**  
Athletic Director



ATHLETICS

# FIRST SEMESTER 2019-2020



## Mount Michael Benedictine School Deans List

### SENIORS

#### FIRST HONORS

John Ackerman  
Joe Bazata  
Calvin Benson  
Max Berens  
Nick Buresh  
Seth Carpenter  
Joey Chen  
Ryan Choi

Addison Cousin-  
Hardrick  
Joshua Davies  
Ben deMayo  
Jerry Fan  
Ben Gao  
Jacob Gathje  
Ben Goetz  
Jack Gottschalk

Will Janecek  
Andree Kakish  
Sangyeom Kim  
Michael Kremer  
Jacob Kubasik  
Joe Lytle  
Mason Matukewicz  
Ethan Meduna  
Alex Payne

Daniel Phan  
Charlie Plozay  
Tharein Potuhera  
Ben Quinlan  
Alex Schrier  
Evan Schroder  
John Schroll  
Joshua Snyder  
Keaton Stec

Henry Storbeck  
Sean Stumpff  
Drew Thornton  
Tony Traggiai  
Brayden Whitaker  
Sam Wooten

#### SECOND HONORS

Greg Gonzalez  
Max Kaster  
Cole McNally  
Ian Miller  
Connor Murphy  
Jackson Ramold  
Cliff Roepke  
Max Swinarski

### JUNIORS

#### FIRST HONORS

Lincoln Badley  
Brad Bennett  
Kaleb Brink  
Dylan Brown  
Will Byrnes  
Joe Chouinard  
Colin Christo  
Matthew Collins

Sam Corey  
Eli Crnkovich  
Nick Davis  
Cameron Detwiler  
Scott Ding  
Isaac Gart  
Matthew Geary  
Gavin Gloeb  
Henry Gnann

Sam Gustafson  
Luke Gutschewski  
Henry Hohman  
Parker Hottovy  
Aaron Karnish  
Ben Keller  
Huy Tuan Le  
Airan Lopez  
Brennan McMahon

Quinn McMahon  
Louis Mixan  
Kyle Pelan  
Zachary Rapoza  
Grant Schneider  
Jack Sorensen  
Dane Storch  
Will Stringer  
Daniel Thomas

Ben Tucker  
Nick Wehbe  
Liam West  
Logan Whitcomb  
Griff Wyse

#### SECOND HONORS

Ryan Brown  
Christian Fletcher

Jackson Heller  
Phong Le  
Cameron Mallisee  
Ryan McMahon  
Michael Oehler  
Harrison Tarr  
Cole Wilber

### SOPHOMORES

#### FIRST HONORS

Matthew Allen  
Christopher Angel  
Jurgen Beller  
Caleb Brester  
Luke Broderick  
Carter Cline  
Tucker Cudmore

David Drews  
Colin Eich  
Brendan Farrell  
Marc Fayad  
Landen Fogle  
Grant Foster  
Jagger Hastings  
Matt Janecek

Eric Kaps  
Kevin Kim  
Andrew Lee  
Sam Lund  
Michael Mullin  
Ethan Pentel  
Ben Rempe  
Callan Schroder

Mark Schroll  
Akilan Sivakumar  
Connor Size  
Sawyer Thompson  
Wyatt Torczon  
Max Vossen  
Luke Wooten

#### SECOND HONORS

Jacob Becker  
Andras Cserna  
Raoul Djidjoho  
Aiden Frazier  
Peter Gates  
Ben Gathje  
Jack Giitter

Dillon Haliburton  
Andrew Hartin  
Charles Janecek  
Xavier Johansen  
Colin Robb  
Christopher Wolf

### FRESHMEN

#### FIRST HONORS

A.J. Atayi  
Will Benson  
Will Brewster  
Aiden Brink  
Theodore Bunawan  
Jose Castillo  
Conor Connealy

Taggart Crouse  
Alejandro Cueli  
Sebastian Duran  
Jack Dustin  
Andrew Fink  
Jack Flott  
Ethan Gallant  
Cole Gustafson

Harper Held  
Farhan Kakish  
Andrew Kirklín  
Sam Kleinschmit  
Shintaro Oda  
Nathaniel Oehler  
Ryan Quinlan  
Ethan Rapoza

Matthew Rodgers  
Sebastian Santa-  
Maria  
Elliott Simpson  
Jude Storch  
Ryan Stumpff  
Jacob Sykora  
Ryan Tillotson

Drew Van Haute

#### SECOND HONORS

John Balch  
Nolan Beller  
Jacob Goertz  
Jake Harris  
Max McCoy

Lane Schroeder  
Andrew Tagel  
Andrew Wooden  
Chang Han Yu



# KNIGHT, BOND NIGHT,

*Where everything we touch turns to gold.*

**3, 28, 2020**

**Join us in supporting**

## **Mount Michael Benedictine School**

All proceeds from Night of Knights go towards the school's operating budget. It is our most important fundraiser of the year. Come join us on Saturday, March 28, 2020 for **Knight. Bond Night. It's going to be golden!**



### **NIGHT OF KNIGHTS EVENT CO-CHAIRS 2020**

**Dave '83 and Sam Hohman**

Sons: Henry '21, Harrison '15, Hudson '18



Hudson '18, Henry '21, Sam, Harrison '15, Dave '83

**Dr. Bill and Deb Thomas**

Sons: Bobby '11, Chris '12, Daniel '21



Deb, Bill, Bobby '11, Maddie, Katie, Daniel '21, Chris '12

**Bob and Kathy Van Haute**

Sons: Vince '11, Nate '12, Sam '16, Luke '18, Drew '23



Kathy, Bob, Drew '23, Nate '12, Vince '11, Sam '16, Luke '18





# esports

by Henry Gnann '21

In response to significant interest, Dean of Students Dave Cormier decided to create an esports team, which had its first meeting on Jan. 13. The team began competition play in the winter open with the High School Esports League the week on Jan. 20 with a 13-9 record.

"Esports hadn't been brought up before, but I was aware of colleges and some high schools adding it," Cormier said. "David Drews asked about a team being made and now we're really working on it"

This interest prompted Cormier to send out a schoolwide survey. Out of the 107 students who answered the survey, 80 expressed significant interest in the team.

For David Drews '22, this is exactly what he wanted.

"I thought we needed an esports team about a year ago, but I never did anything because I didn't think anything would come of it," Drews said. "However, Ms. Sullivan told us Mr. Cormier plays video games and I thought 'Why not, it couldn't hurt.'"

With this sport being new, everyone involved is trying to work out the kinks, such as how matches work and how best to form the various internal teams.

"Right now I don't exactly know what to do, so I'm educating myself on the basics," Cormier said.

One team, Rocket League team Black, consisting of Ryan Brown '21, Cameron Detwiler '21, and Joe Lytle '20, swept their competition with two 16-0 wins and a subsequent forfeit.

"It's fun to be able to get it going here and show off what we've got" Detwiler said.

To help build a sense of team the group has taken over an old office in the Benedict Building. This room features huge flatscreens which were loaned by the robotics program, as well as several consoles and PC's that students on the team have brought in. These machines have been added to the network with Dr. Rzemysk's help.

The room is often filled with players practicing or competing after school, it maintains a lively atmosphere.

How this new activity will fit in to the rest of the activities culture here is still being worked out.

"The question is if physical sports and esports will come into conflict. We want it to be accessible for everyone, so we're playing around with the issue right now," Cormier said.

At the moment, esports will not be replacing any physical sports this year and "ideally won't replace the fall sport requirement in the future."

Many students expressed enthusiasm over the new opportunity.

**"The nice thing about esports is that there's something for everyone. There are a variety of games to play, so everyone can find one that they're good at," Callan Farrell '20 said.**



By all accounts, Drews, who has formed a team for CS:GO, couldn't be happier.

"I want to play video games for my school with my friends, and esports was the way to do it," he said.



Our call to become Oblates of St. Benedict is a call to explore the mystery that is God. Oblates of St. Benedict are Christian individuals who associate themselves with a Benedictine community to enrich their lives. St. Benedict tells the novice that the purpose of monastic life is to seek God. The

oblate responds to a similar call that was initiated by God to explore the mystery through monastic spirituality as a part of the monastic community. We have an active and multi-generational oblate community here at Mount Michael Abbey.

We should listen and look, to pray daily that the spirit of God opens our ears and eyes and cures our blindness and deafness. Faithfulness to Benedictine values will ensure that our life will give "glory to God." As Benedictine oblates live their commitment in truth and peace, they can challenge the world with a vision based on the gospel message of love.

Like the Desert Fathers and Mothers, we should let our lives burn bright with the life of Christ within us. We should ask ourselves: "Do I keep feeding the fire or am I letting it die out?" The following is a story from the Desert Fathers:

"Abba Lot went to see Abba Joseph and said to him: Abba, as much as I am able, I practice a small rule, a little fasting, some prayer and meditation and remain quiet and as much as possible I keep my thoughts clean. What else should I do? Then the old man stood up and stretched his hands toward heaven, and his fingers became like ten torches and he said to him: If you wish, you can become all flame."

St. Benedict tells us to run on the pathway of God, who is a consuming fire with the gospel as our guide. "Run while you have the light of life, that the darkness of death may not overtake you." The Oblates of St. Benedict offer people an opportunity to further explore and be consumed by the love and light of God.

Oblates at our monthly meetings practice the prayer form of Lectio Divina, study, and pray the Rule of St. Benedict. This shared time deepens their commitments of stability, conversion, and obedience, all the while seeking God as oblates of St. Benedict.

Br. Jerome Kmiecik O.S.B.  
Oblate Director



On March 4th, Fr. John Hagemann O.S.B. organized a 50 year celebration concert featuring members from the Omaha Symphonic Chorus, Mount Michael alumni, and present students.



Top photo: Dr. Brion Dalton '92, Dr. Tim Dalton '89, Fr. John Hagemann O.S.B. '67, Fr. Dan Andrews '89, Chad Grosse-Rhode '88

Bottom photo: Fr. Dan Andrews '89, Trenton Sedlacek '20, Ryan Choi '20, Dr. Brion Dalton '92, Huy Tuan Le '21, Scott Ding '21, Jimmy Kim '20, Dr. Tim Dalton '89, Chad Grosse-Rhode '88, Fr. John Hagemann O.S.B. '67, Vincent Harvey '13



# THE RELUCTANT ORGANIST

## FROM BENNINGTON, NEBRASKA

In early September of 1986, for various reasons, I found myself without an organist. I will admit that I had become more than a bit frantic about having an organist for one of the most important Solemnities of Mount Michael—The Solemnity of the Archangels Raphael, Michael and Gabriel. Literally, I started calling and asking whomever I could find. Finally, I had a lead as close as Bennington, NE – Marilyn Theis. First, I called to see if this woman was home and might consider playing our chapel organ for just this occasion. I must admit that I was not met with a whole lot of enthusiasm on her end, but she did agree to allow me to come for a visit. I almost had to twist her arm when I first met her, but she agreed to come over to see the organ and then to play for just this occasion. But honestly, I knew she was not real keen about the instrument she was playing.

At that time, Marilyn was working on her MA degree in Sacred Music and Organ Performance. She was driving back and forth from Bennington and the University of Nebraska in Lincoln while studying with Dr. George Ritchie and Dr. Quinten Faulkner. She was also raising three children at the time and keeping order in her home. She was really not looking for more work helping out the monks down the road from Bennington.

September of 1986 was the beginning of a very wonderful 34 years working together in liturgical music as well as choir and band music. Not only have Marilyn and her family created melodic beauty for the monks, but she has done wonders with many, many Mount Michael students over all these years.

Once Marilyn got over her reluctance to become a part of Mount Michael, she jumped in with both feet. Besides being one of the abbey organists, she also has been the force behind the band, choir, musicals, and taught drafting as well. She also worked in the crafts department during Camp St. John in the summer time and helped me many times with my sewing machine and her quilting expertise. Just a few years ago,

Marilynn retired from all school work, but still works with me in liturgical areas. We have become a team and she can read me and I can read her without verbal communication.

Together over all these years, she has helped me get our organ to where it is now. She and her husband Terry Theis helped me with leads to reconstruct our organ. They lead me to Randy George of happy memory, who was so patient with my non-existent budget to build the organ we now have. I was collecting pipes from lots of different places, including pipes from a building where the Masons had one whole floor. This building was right next to St. Mary Magdalene, downtown Omaha. The building is no longer there. It was demolished. But now some of those pipes are a part of Mount Michael's organ.

We have wonderful memories of doing musicals together, concerts with Mount Michael students, getting the band to play at football and basketball games, even at state

championship games, and of course participating in All State Choir and Band competitions and concerts. What a ride it has been. I still have reel to reel tapes of some concerts that Br. Luke used to make for us. Although they are not the best recordings, they are great to listen to and to reminisce about great memories.

And in the midst of all of this work for Mount

Michael, Marilyn was dean of the Omaha Chapter of American Guild Organists and she holds a professional certificate for Service Playing from the American Guild of Organists.

The whole Mount Michael Community is most grateful to you, Marilyn for all the years you have served us. You have been a wonderful addition to our family and community. May God always reward you and your family for sharing your gifts with us. You have been a great reason why we have to come to live and believe that St. Augustine was correct: "When you sing, you pray twice." Thank you! You have helped us pray better!



# Br. Mel

**Even in his old age, his past athleticism shines through. The painstaking walk across the room does not show it, but the powerful toss of the wooden cane into the couch does. Despite the white hair and sunken eyes, his broad shoulders still stand out.**

by Jacob Gathje '20

In his younger years as a monk, Br. Mel Tichota '60 was well-known for his physical prowess. Although he has slowed down a bit, his personality still stands out.

"He's a genuine person," Br. Luke Clinton said. "He's very down to earth. He's put in a lot of physical work over the years. We were novices in the monastery together, and we planted trees. I think he could dig three holes in the time it took me to dig one."

However, in his old age, as his strength and young looks have started to leave him, he still talks about his time in the seminary and monastery as if they were just yesterday. Over the years, he has seen the evolution from monastery to seminary to high school.

"I've been here for 42 years, and they've gone very quickly," he said. "The change is unbelievable."

According to Br. Mel, the school has gone through three stages, the first of which being the seminary.

"As a seminary you had farm kids, ranch kids, Native American kids, and kids from the whole Midwest," he said. "It was a bunch of guys studying. Most didn't graduate."

The second stage came during the years before and after the seminary transitioned into a seven day boarding high school and legendary coach Jim "Killer" Kane was hired.

"The second period was when it was really a sports school," Br. Mel said. "Coach Kane put us on the map. He had all his athletes here all the time, so he could coach forever. They weren't going to go anywhere."

The final stage is the school today, focused on academic gains and college preparation.

"With the new school building, it's really a professional, elite school," he said. "When I was here, there was nothing professional or elite about it."

Despite all of the changes, there has been one constant in Br. Mel's life since he joined the monastery: the routine of monastic life.

"It's healthy," he said. "Monastic life has a good routine: prayer, meals, recreation. You go to bed at the same time and wake up at the same time."

A large part of that routine is the prayer and work life, also things Br. Mel has enjoyed over the years.



"What I love most is the prayer life," he said. "Monks are men of prayer. That's what we're here for. Work is important, too. Back in the day we did everything from bale hay to taking care of the horses. You were always asked to just help."

Even though he enjoys the prayer and work portion of monastic life, that does not mean it has all been without struggle. Difficulties between monks are always prevalent.

"The hardest part would be living with other people you would usually choose not to live with," he said. "Out in the world, if you don't like somebody, you leave or go work out."

However, that is not an option for members of the monastery. According to Br. Mel, the thing that allows people to find a way to live with each other is the rule they live by.

"The Rule of St. Benedict is such an intricate masterpiece," he said. "Otherwise, how can you do this and get along with everybody?"

With the help of the Rule of St. Benedict, Br. Mel has been able to do a multitude of things since he joined the monastery. However, his health has recently slowed his ability to do many of them.

"Teaching, driving the buses, working at the camp, and spinning ropes are all things I loved to do," he said. "I can't do it anymore, but I would if I could."

Although he cannot do those activities, Br. Mel would not want to be anywhere else.

"I love my life here," he said.



# Alumni News

Over New Years, these Mount Michael alumni attended the Student Leadership Summit put on by FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) in Phoenix, AZ.



Fr. Dan Andrews '89, Paul Hotovy '07, Jacob Connealy '11, Andrew Nigro '18, Trevin Detwiler '19, James Crotty '19, and Patrick Fayad '19.

The Benedictine values of community, hospitality, and stewardship were certainly top of mind as a large group of Knights gathered to celebrate Eric Crawford's '00 induction as a 2019 TOYO! recipient.



John Gathje, Dylan Parlor '07, J.T. Cronin '13, Nick Hall '07, Andy Jewell '08, Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, S.J. '89, Abiola Kosoko '05, Eric Crawford '00, Abbot Michael Liebl O.S.B. '68, Jim Clements '95, Tim McTaggart '99, Cliff McEvoy '00, Bill Crawford '98



**Daniel Hassing '02** was recently made partner at Lamson Dugan & Murray LLP.

**David Greenamyre '99** was recently made partner at Armanino LLP.



## BIRTHS



**Capt. Joe Vacha, USAF, '04** and his wife Jaimie welcomed their son Henry Ladislav on November 14th, 2019.



**Min Rho '06** and his wife Sunghee Ahn welcomed their daughter Hayoon Roh on December 19th, 2019.



**Jimmy Bender '07** and his wife Kelsey welcomed their daughter Emerson Marie Bender on December 28th, 2019.

For this year's Catholic Schools Week, Mount Michael Chaplin, Fr. John Hagemann O.S.B., arranged for three alumni and one current student to address the student body at morning assemblies to start each day. Each spoke on their experience as Mount Michael students from their unique perspectives.



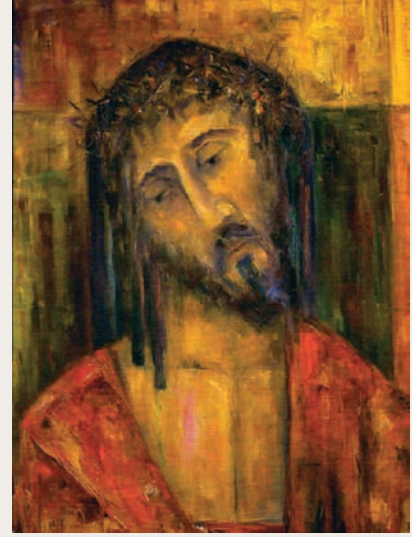
Floyd Stoddard '75   Jean-Marie Djidjoho '17   Joe Bazata '20   Tom Feichtinger '12



**Tyler Knott '06** and his wife Brooke welcomed their son Quaid Alexander Knott on December 30th, 2019.



**Steven Stackhouse '05** and his wife Lauren welcomed their son James Edward Stackhouse on March 1st, 2020.



### Mass Information

If you find that your pastor is unable to conveniently take care of Masses you wish to have celebrated for your particular intentions, Mount Michael Abbey welcomes the requests for such intentions. We will see to it that the Masses are celebrated as promptly as possible.

The offering you make should correspond with that suggested by the diocese in which you reside. Your pastor will be able to inform you of what the stipend of a particular diocese may be.

Mass Intentions: \$10.00

Please address such requests to:

Mass Intentions  
Development Office  
Mount Michael Benedictine Abbey  
22520 Mount Michael Road  
Elkhorn, NE 68022

### Memorial & Tribute Information

Often, inquiries are made about our memorials and tributes for relatives and friends, living or deceased. At Mount Michael one can enroll families or friends in our memorial and tribute foundation. This consists of daily remembrance at the Eucharist and the Divine Office by the monks of Mount Michael Abbey. Upon enrollment, we will notify the family with a card.

*The suggested offering for this memorial enrollment is:*

INDIVIDUAL	FAMILY
One Year . . . . . \$50	One Year . . . . . \$100
Five Years . . . . . \$100	Five Years . . . . . \$200
Lifetime . . . . . \$250	Lifetime . . . . . \$500



If you would like to include an announcement in an upcoming issue of the *Michaeleen*, please contact

John Von Dollen '12, 402-238-1447  
jvondollen@mountmichael.org

# In Memoriam & Honor

## December 2nd, 2019 - February 25th 2020

Mount Michael Benedictine keeps all those in memoriam and honor in our prayers.

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**In Memory of Christopher Assmann '95**

Dawn Assmann  
Patrick Assmann

**In Honor of Br. Mark Bern, O.S.B.**

Ann Coles

**In Memory of George Burkland**

Rose Mary Burkland

**In Memory of Gerald Cihal**

Dennis and Sandra Cihal

**In Memory of Bernard Costello**

UNMC College of Nursing

**In Memory of Kristi Coughlin**

Coughlin Enterprises, Inc.  
Dr. David and Nancy Peters

**In Memory of Donald Curtis**

Irene Curtis

**In Memory of Josephine Elworth**

Robert Elworth '85

**In Memory of Maryann Everitt**

Brian '84 and Kris Morrissey  
Dr. David and Nancy Peters

**In Memory of Kathleen Garza**

Mary Clare Beninato

**In Honor of Luke Gutschewski '21**

Bernard Gutschewski

**In Honor of Cole Kalkowski '19**

Christopher and Marsha Kalkowski

**In Honor of Logan Kalkowski '15**

Christopher and Marsha Kalkowski

**In Honor of Barbara and Donald Lanspa**

Mark Lanspa '80

**In Memory of Gladys Mandel**

Mary Clare Beninato

**In Memory of Rev. Albert Massmann O.S.B.**

David and Joanne Kolenda

**In Memory of Bill McDermott**

James '66 and Penney McDermott

**In Memory of Timothy McReynolds**

Jane Flood  
Newark Knight Frank  
Paul and Ruth Maginn  
Jan McReynolds  
Dr. David and Nancy Peters  
J.J. Ricketts  
Lyle and Helen Sapp  
Kathryn Schinker  
Michael Sherr  
William Smisek  
Gene and Marilyn Spence  
Denis Walsh

**In Memory of Cheryl McTaggart**

Steven '88 and Traci McTaggart  
David '94 and Jocelyn McTaggart

**In Memory of Ruth Newburn**

Dr. David and Nancy Peters

**In Memory of Terrance O'Hare**

Mary Clare Beninato

**In Memory of Thomas O'Keefe**

Amy Allbaugh  
Peter Demarco  
Avrom Gart  
Myles and Theresa Gart  
Pam Handke  
Patrick and Catherine Mullen  
Dr. David and Nancy Peters

**In Memory of Mark Pelan**

Ted and Jean Crouchley

**In Memory of Theodore Richling**

Dr. David and Nancy Peters

**In Memory of Madalen Rief**

Marvin and Dorothy Rief  
James Tiedeman

**In Memory of Br. Francis Schmitz, O.S.B.**

Larry and Jeri Bartek  
Ryan '87 and Terese Hendrickson  
Fr. Owen Korte '72

**In Honor of David and Peggy Sokol**

Bill and Jodie Mackintosh

**In Memory of Br. Andrew Sorensen, O.S.B.**

Michael and Betsy Sorensen

**In Memory of James Sullivan**

Anonymous  
BCDM Architects  
Daniel and Rita Dolan  
John and Susan Hake  
Brian and Barbara Hake  
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Carol Lange  
Jason and Linda Lytle  
Michael and Deborah McLarney  
Bennie and Jamesena Moore  
Roy and Lucy Neneman  
H.M. and Judy Nordland  
Thomas and Marikay Schwaller  
Allen and Kathy Stow  
Rita Sullivan  
David and Julianne Svingen  
Barbara Walker

**In Memory of Fr. Richard Thell, O.S.B.**

Jason Smith '87

**In Memory of Steve Todd**

Marvin and Dorothy Rief

**In Memory of Abbot Raphael Walsh, O.S.B.**

James Kineen  
Jerry and Anne Pape



**MOUNT MICHAEL**  
BENEDICTINE SCHOOL  
1970 - 2020

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# Michaeleen

A Quarterly Publication of  
MOUNT MICHAEL BENEDICTINE ABBEY & SCHOOL

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## Mount Michael Directory

**Mount Michael Chapel**  
Visitors are always welcome  
Daily Mass 7:15am | Sunday Mass 9:30am | Saturday 8:00am

**Liturgy of the Hours (Monday-Saturday)**  
Morning Praise 6:30am | Noon Day Prayer 11:45am  
Vespers 5:15pm | Night Prayer (In the Abbey) 7:00pm

**St. Benedict Guest House**  
Gift Shop/Lunches/Teas/Dessert | Day Retreats  
Brother Jerome Kmiecik, O.S.B., 402-206-2069

**Vocation Ministry**  
For information about monastic life:  
Brother August Schaefer, O.S.B., [vocations@mountmichael.org](mailto:vocations@mountmichael.org)

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**Alumni Association**  
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