



### **What is Fall Festival?**

In September of 1955 Gunsmoke premiered on television. President Dwight Eisenhower suffered a heart attack while on vacation in Denver. Baseball's Brooklyn Dodgers clinched the National League pennant. And... in that same September the recently arrived monks of Mount Michael staged the very first Fall Festival. Each year, Mount Michael continues the autumn tradition of welcoming families, friends, alumni and patrons to celebrate with the Annual Fall Festival.

The more things change, the more they remain the same. What started out as a meeting in the back yard of some of our friends, developed into the Mount Michael Association. These friends decided to hold an annual Fall Festival to raise money for the Abbey and St. John Seminary. The beginnings were small, but over the years the enthusiasm and efforts of the Mount Michael Association made the Fall Festival a major attraction in the Omaha area, drawing thousands of people. Spearheaded by the boundless energy of Father Joseph Peters, O.S. B. and Father Mario Gramlich, O.S.B., each year we had a major attraction for the Festival. Over the years, we have watched a motorcyclist jump over twelve buses (we all held our breath on that one), hot air balloon rides, Dunk a Monk (a real favorite for the students), a space shuttle on display, and a classic car show. The Fall Festival was the Abbey's only fundraiser. It was imperative that it be successful because each November we had a note due on the loan for the seminary building. The Lord blessed us and every year we met that obligation! Over all of those years, we have had only three complete rain outs. With the passage of time and the aging of the members of the Mount Michael Association, who served us so well for so many years, the efforts to make the Festival a yearly success have been passed on. With the generosity of our students, parents and staff, along with the help of our friends and alumni families, the Festival continues to be a fun day for the whole family. The Fall Festival remains the Abbey's major fundraiser and its success is important to help us meet our financial obligations. Let this be our invitation to you to join us for a day of entertainment, food, games, family and friends.

~ The Late Abbot Raphael Walsh, O.S.B.