

The Abbey Message

Subiaco Abbey

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Winter 2026

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www.subi.org

My Vocation Story

by Br. Augustine DeFoore, OSB

On January 8, 2025, I will be blessed to make my solemn profession as a monk of Subiaco Abbey and become a permanent member of the community.

I was raised in Van Buren, Arkansas, and I have two younger brothers. My family is all protestant, and I was brought up in a few different denominations, but mostly the Church of the Nazarene. Growing up, I had a strong faith formation, marked by frequent Bible reading and memorizing scripture. I attended public schools and was homeschooled for a time. After graduating from high school, I attended the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith, where I studied Criminal Justice. I then worked in various forms of public safety for thirteen years.

From an early age, I felt a call to serve God, and I'd thought off and on

about being a pastor or missionary. During my high school and college years, my faith started to fall apart due to different circumstances and poor choices on my part. Then, after suffering a terrible loss, I abandoned the faith and became angry with God, blaming Him for everything that happened. During that time, I even delved into paganism and the occult, thinking it would fill the void and bring me peace. After three years of traveling down that path, I had



Monastic Life

a radical encounter with God that completely changed my life. After returning to Christianity, I felt Him calling me to the Catholic Church. Christ revealed himself to me in the Eucharist, and I knew that I needed the sacraments and the fullness of the faith. I started RCIA in November of 2017, and I was brought into full communion with the Catholic Church on July 7, 2018.

After my conversion to Catholicism, the call to serve God returned, and I started discerning a vocation with the Diocese of Little Rock. I eventually determined that I wasn't being called to the diocesan priesthood. Leading up to that point, I'd had numerous people ask me if I'd ever considered a monastic vocation or joining Subiaco Abbey. My response was always "No! Why would I want to do that?" After a while, I realized that might in fact be God trying to tell me something. I contacted Fr. Raban at the Abbey and made my first visit. I hated to admit it, but even after that first visit, Subiaco Abbey felt like home. I continued visiting and then entered as a candidate on September 6, 2021. I was then invested as a novice on February 1, 2022, and made my temporary vows on February 2, 2023. I took the name Augustine for St. Augustine of Canterbury, the

first saint I connected with after my conversion.

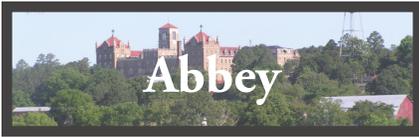
The monastic life has allowed me to encounter Christ in new and humbling ways. During my time in the abbey, I've seen God work in so many lives, including my own. This community, both my monastic brothers and everyone else on the hill, has become like family. Even though, like all vocations, there are difficult days, I can sincerely say this is where God has called me, this is my community, and I am truly blessed to be here. 

Save the Date

The annual Subiaco Academy Spring Festival is being planned for Saturday, March 7, 2026. Plans are underway to include area vendors and crafters, live music, and a variety of foods, as well as games and prizes for the entire family. The event will be held in the Green Room of the Academy Athletics facility, which is now a climate-controlled area with a new sound system. Our annual raffle and information about the festival will be rolling out in January. Watch for times and updates about the festival on our social media pages. Make plans to join us and support Subiaco Academy. We look forward to seeing you there!



Fr. Cassian Elkins enjoying the cuisine with Academy students at the 2025 Festival.



DEO GRATIAS!

Dear Friends,

Praise be Jesus Christ! As I write this section of our quarterly publication, we have just come through a remarkable few months. In our Education apostolate, Subiaco Academy has now become the Niche.com #1 ranked private high school in Arkansas, #1 college-prep high school in Arkansas, and #1 Catholic high school in Arkansas. In our Hospitality apostolate, Coury House continues to host retreats for men and women from across the country who come seeking prayer and rest away from the busyness of the world. In our monastery, we recently completed our Swiss-American congregational visitation (an in-depth review and assessment of our monastic life) with very positive results. We also received word that we have been accredited by Praesidium for our safeguarding work following their multi-day onsite visit and audit. Soon after came the joyful Chapter vote approving Br. Augustine's petition for solemn vows, followed by the approval and my calling Br. Sebastian (see photo) to Holy Orders. He will be ordained a transitional deacon for our abbey on his way to priestly ordination in 2027. God has richly blessed Subiaco, and to Him we give thanks.

From the earliest days of monastic life, the words DEO GRATIAS ("Thanks be to God") have served not merely as a pious formula but as a way of seeing. Gratitude is not an ornament in the spiritual life; it is the lens through which we Benedictines seek to interpret reality. St. Benedict understood this deeply. In the Rule, he reminds the monk to recognize God's presence in every moment and to respond with humility and thanksgiving: "Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may He bring us all together to everlasting life" (RB 72). To prefer nothing to Christ is to acknowledge that all good flows from Him and to receive each moment, challenge, and joy with grateful hearts.

Gratitude is not passive, nor does it pretend that difficulties are blessings in disguise. Instead, gratitude strengthens us to perceive how God is at work even in the imperfect and unfinished places of our lives. For us monks, and for the faithful who partner with us, DEO GRATIAS becomes a

declaration of trust: God is here, God is working, and God will bring His good to completion.

All of you, as collaborators in this mission, participate intimately in this hymn. Your prayers strengthen our vocation; your generosity sustains our life of prayer, hospitality, work, and study. When we say DEO GRATIAS in the liturgy, we carry you with us into that prayer. You share in every Mass offered, every psalm chanted, every guest welcomed, and every young monk formed in the school of the Lord's service. Monastic life is never solitary; neither for those within the cloister nor for friends who accompany us from afar. Together we give thanks.

As we begin 2026 and look toward the future of our abbey, we are so richly blessed and do so with confidence rooted in thanksgiving. The God who has sustained us since 1878 continues to guide, strengthen, and inspire us today. St. Benedict's promise that Christ will "bring us all together to everlasting life" is not only our hope for eternity but a daily reality shaped by gratitude... gratitude for God, for one another, and for all who share in our mission.

May our lives, our prayers, and our work proclaim always and everywhere: DEO GRATIAS!

+Abbot Elijah Owens



Misplaced Responsibility

by Fr. Jerome Kodell, OSB

Many of the things that cause people anxiety and concern and even guilt are not their responsibility at all. The news services tell us what is going on in the world, which is a good thing, but we go too far in taking responsibility for people and events we can do nothing about.

We may be horrified by the suffering of the innocent in the Ukraine and in Gaza and by the actions of government leaders which initiate or perpetuate the carnage, but we are in no position to intervene. If we have any responsibility, it is closer to home within our orbit of ability. It may seem small, but at least it is real.

Some will have the calling, along with the strength and energy, to involve themselves in political action, either locally or nationally, with the hope of eventually making an impact on world events. Most of us will do our part by voting, by living as good citizens, by supporting worthy causes, and by prayer.

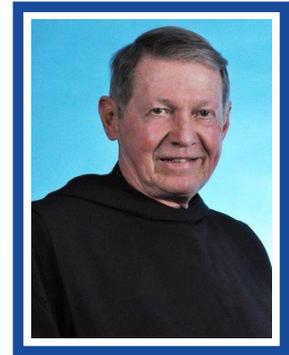
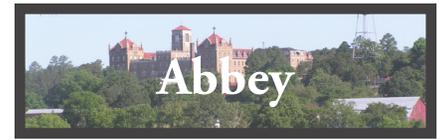
This seems rather small, and it is. Most of us live in local communities, not on the world stage. We affect the world by the way we live where we are. Unless we are catapulted to a higher range, we cannot make a national or international impact. What keeps us from peace is that in our minds we are worrying and making decisions about matters we cannot impact, and this may distract us from doing the good we are called to do where we are.

Cardinal Newman, our newest Doctor of the Church, made the point that when Jesus rose from the

dead he did not show himself to great numbers of people but only to a few chosen witnesses. The world will not be converted all at once, by a great spectacle, but by the faithful lives of those who are really convinced, a very few at first.

The Apostles did not feel it was their responsibility to expose and attack the evils of the Roman Empire by a direct assault. Jesus did not do that, and neither did they. They knew what was going on, but did not wring their hands because they could not change the government and the society. That was not their responsibility. Their responsibility was to be faithful to the vocation they had been given, which was at first on a very small stage: to preach the gospel while living faithfully in accord with its truth.

Newman described the responsibility of most Christians as not to make a public spectacle but to live faithfully, often under the radar, affecting reality at a deeper dimension. He put this in terms of fidelity, living the truth: "Truth bears witness by itself to its Divine Author. One who obeys God conscientiously and lives holily, forces all about him to believe and tremble before the unseen power of Christ. To the world indeed at large he witnesses not; for few can see him near enough to be moved by his manner of living. But to his neighbors he manifests the Truth in proportion to their knowledge of him; and some of them, through God's blessing, catch the holy flame, cherish it, and in their turn transmit it. And thus in a dark world



Truth still makes its way in spite of the darkness, passing from hand to hand."

What God expects from us is to do good where we are, in the place in his design where we are placed at the moment. This may change, as life changes and new calls arise, and then we adapt to the new situation. But to live as if our responsibility is elsewhere, even beyond our control, is an illusion and a refusal to accept our own reality in the sight of God. Misplaced responsibility is irresponsibility. While we're trying to do what we can't, we are not able to do what we can. 

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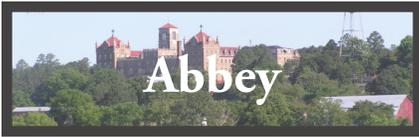
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The Oblate Brief: Speech according to St. Benedict

by Fr. Mark Stengel, Director and Jeanette Stengel Redford, Oblate

The presenter at our October retreat, Bob Lesniewski, of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, talked to us about speech and challenged us to speak to a stranger at least once a week. It sounds counter to the “don’t talk to strangers!” philosophy but, acknowledging the people around us is important for them and good for us. He encouraged us to think about who God says we are, instead of worrying about what, or who, other people say we are. It is important to remember God in us and them...to remember that each person has a soul made by God.

While thinking of speech that builds up, we must also remember the kind that does not. There are numerous verses in the Bible telling us how we should, or should not, speak. One verse says, “No foul language should come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for needed edification, that it may impart grace to those who hear.” (Eph. 4:29) Any language that tears someone down, defames God or is vulgar in content is certainly not imparting grace to the hearer.

The Rule of St. Benedict, as translator Terence Kardong, OSB renders it, “...puts an absolute clamp” on such language in the monastery. Murmuring, (does that include muttering?), is seen as a deadly and destructive vice which cannot be tolerated. Murmuring is talk that is self-aggrandizing and other-demeaning; the opposite of other-uplifting. The ‘other’ might be a family member, a colleague, a boss, or God. In Chapter six of the Rule, Benedict says, “I have set a guard (a muzzle) to my mouth so that I may not sin with my tongue.”

Still, we cannot always be silent for fear of saying the wrong thing. We must pray, sift our words as through a sieve and let the chaff of our conversation just blow away, so that we can, “refrain not from speaking at the proper time and hide not away our wisdom; for it is through speech that wisdom is known, and knowledge through the tongue’s rejoinder.” (Sir. 4:23) Oblate Tessa Melancon sent these wise words: “Perhaps the wisdom of Benedict is proving to be an antidote to today’s upheavals. Embracing stability and living in community while adoring Jesus and Mary may bring harmony back into one’s soul and with each other.”

There were thirty retreatants at the Fall retreat and four new novices: Jeremy Alcorn, Glenna Fisk, and John David and Theresa Jones. We welcome you and pray for God’s continued grace to you.

The next retreat will be May 8-10, 2026. Please call the Coury House at (479) 934-1290 to register for this retreat. If you have any questions about being an Oblate, contact Fr. Mark Stengel, Oblate Director at frmark@subi.org.

Through their ministry of prayer and hospitality, the monks of Subiaco offer the opportunity for a peaceful and spiritual final resting place and repository for the ashes of people who have been cremated.

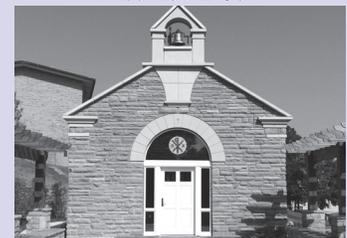
The Abbey Columbarium is situated adjacent to the Abbey cemetery where the monks are buried and is patterned in the form of a chapel dedicated to the monastery’s patron saint, Our Lady of Einsiedeln.

The columbarium is not for the monks themselves but is being offered to people who have a desire to be buried in a holy place where prayers are offered for the departed.

For more information, we invite you to contact us.

Linda Freeman, Director of Development
479-934-1029
lfreeman@subi.org
OR

Glenn Constantino, Procurator
479-438-2653



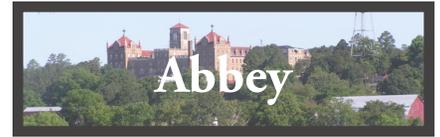
PRAYER HOTLINE 1-800-350-5889

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.

Memorials for deceased family and friends or **Living Tributes** for birthdays, anniversaries, or special occasions are available at www.subi.org or call 479-934-1001.





Abbey Journal

by Fr. Mark Stengel, OSB

SEPTEMBER

For many years, several Councils of the Knights of Columbus have been coming to do service projects here at the Abbey. The Knights from Gainesville, TX Council #1167 holds an annual retreat here, and perhaps they see things that could/should be taken care of. More likely various monks—like Br. Francis and now, Fr. Patrick—respond eagerly to their offers of help. In a recent session, Fr. Patrick had them add a beautiful deck outside the second-floor conference room of Coury House, and this year they cleaned the patio and turned its fishpond feature into a flowerbed. Such fishponds require constant cleaning and maintenance, without which they turn into weed-choked, mosquito-breeding sites. We are finally rid of this constant reproach. An additional “service” provided by the Knights at these “Ora et Labora” retreats is the Saturday evening social. It is good to share stories with these good men. Thank you, K of C!

A brief power outage—I forget the reason—was scheduled for 7:30 a.m. on September 17th, right in the middle of the morning Conventual Mass. At the singing of the “Holy, Holy,” the lights went out, and pump and fan noise stopped. Brilliant light streamed in through the “ad orientem” Lady of Einseiedeln window. With the autumnal equinox only days away, the rising sun shone directly and

fully through this window. The golden baldichino and the silver corpus of the cross glowed as with an inner light. It was impressive and “awe-ful”—gorgeous.

It rained all night of the 21st, and the morning measurement was an amazing 7.36 inches! Cane Creek was way out of its banks, and our north pasture turned into a lake now abutting the creek overflow. Monks agreed that this was the heaviest one-day—or one night—rain we have experienced in living memory. Other than a few washed out culverts and fences knocked down by debris flow, there was little real damage. Amazingly, the spillway of the water supply lakes had only a trickle. When the heavily-forested watershed is dry, as it was, it can absorb a tremendous amount of water before starting a flow into the lakes. By the next day, and especially after two more inches on the 24th, the spillway became a torrent. And the month ended with a total of 10.5 inches of rain.

OCTOBER

Fr. Eugene, our oldest monk, was 89 on October 6. Incredibly, our youngest monk at 35, shares the same birthday. We honored both of them at the evening meal by singing Happy Birthday and enjoying cake and ice cream. Fr. Eugene remains quite active and is the go-to guy for any metal fabrication or lathe work, or a brazing or welding job. Br. Augustine (Augustine

of Canterbury, not Augustine of Hippo) is a sacristan, “writes” icons and teaches an iconography class in the Academy, and serves on the CERT team (Campus Emergency Response Team).

Oblate Bob Lesniewski, from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, came on October 6 for his annual week of monastery time. He enjoys working and praying with us, and this year part of his work was to be the presenter for the Oblate retreat of Oct. 10-12. A retired organizer for the Paralympic Association, he now organizes ecumenical prayer services, and prayer events for special needs people in his area, and a yearly fund raiser for cancer research. An impressive guy.

NOVEMBER

On All Souls Day, a smallish group came to join the monks for the cemetery visit. This event includes the procession from Church, during which the Litany of Saints is sung. In the cemetery, after the Scripture about the resurrected dead meeting the angels in the air, the names of all those buried in the cemetery are read out. During this, the Abbot sprinkles holy water on each grave. Several of the guests, and some monks, have the cremains of relatives in the columbarium, just to one side of the monks’ gravestones. The guests enjoyed a soup and sandwich supper afterwards.



Journal

Fr. Richard hustled to cover the tropical-jungle greenhouse before the first frost on November 2nd. The heavily laden Habanero pepper plants were also pulled up and carried into the old butcher shop. There the remaining peppers could be stripped off. I would not say “at leisure”, since that job is still tedious work, and beyond my strength. Pulling those super-hot peppers in the enclosed space, with capsaicin-laden dust in the air, threw my lungs into paroxysms of coughing. The second day was worse than the first, and I decided against a third. Other helpers did some coughing too, but not to my debilitating degree.

All were invited and urged to come to the sendoff of the Academy football Trojans to the state championship game. They were to play a team that our Trojans had never beaten, the Bobcats from Corning, AR. The sendoff was a rousing and raucous affair, with all hands on deck, including the visitors. Maybe this provided the needed spark. The Trojans won, 34-0, not allowing the Bobcats to score. State and diocesan papers featured the story. We had not won a state championship since sometime in the 1940s or 50s. Go Trojans!



Breaking Bread

by Linda Freeman, Director of Development

It’s a busy fall weekend at the end of October at Subiaco Abbey. The campus and retreat center are filled with visitors and partners in our mission, all here for various reasons. There are grandparents arriving in response to their grandson’s invitation to the annual Subiaco Academy Grandparents Day, as well as parents of our students attending Fall Parent Weekend and parent-teacher conferences. Retreatants check into the Coury House for a weekend of prayer and meditation—a chance to come back to the middle and rededicate themselves to God. And amid all this action, there is energy and business among the monks as they prepare to welcome guests in their private dining room for An Evening with the Monks.

The monastic hosts this year were Fr. Jerome Kodell and Br. Adrian Strobel. As preparations for the event moved forward, there were meetings to attend and plans to make regarding anything from the schedule to what types of food would be served. Decisions,

decisions! Too many for a monk? Perhaps the details would be better left to those familiar with event planning and the monks worry about the hospitality portion. And as it turned out, that’s just what happened!

The room was set up by the junior monks and members of the Development Team, while the rest of the monastic community rolled out the “Benedictine red carpet,” beginning with praying together at Vespers. Then all were led to the monastic refectory where the tables were set in a formal design, and guests were shown to their seats. Wine and beverages flowed as the meal was served by the junior monks and others in three courses to about 60 guests. The gracious spirit of the hosts made for a lovely and enjoyable evening of breaking bread with the monks. It was a great time of fellowship as longtime friends and collaborators shared conversations and gave thanks to God for the continued presence and partnership of the Benedictine monks of Subiaco Abbey.





Stewardship, Legacy, and the Gift of Beneficiary Designations

In the Letter of James, we are reminded that “every good and perfect gift is from above.” Everything we possess, our time, talents, and resources, comes from God and is entrusted to us for a purpose greater than ourselves. The Catechism reinforces this truth, teaching that while private property is a legitimate right, it does not erase the universal destination of goods. As Catechism 2403 states, “The right to private property...does not do away with the original gift of the earth to the whole of mankind.” In other words, our material blessings are ultimately meant to serve the common good.

One simple and impactful way to do this is through a beneficiary designation gift. Not everyone is ready to revise a will or make a formal bequest. However, many appreciate the flexibility of naming a charity, such as Subiaco Abbey, on accounts that already allow beneficiaries. These gifts are easy to establish and can be updated at any time.

Consider designating Subiaco Abbey as a beneficiary on one of the following:

- IRAs and other retirement accounts
- Life insurance policies
- Commercial annuities

Completing such a gift typically takes just three steps: Request a beneficiary-change form from your financial institution, insurance company, or retirement plan administrator; choose the percentage (1%–100%) you wish to allocate to Subiaco Abbey; submit the completed form back to your provider.

To see how meaningful this type of gift can be, consider the example of Jack and Jill. Over the years, they joyfully supported both their children and their Catholic community. When updating their estate plan, they decided to leave their children the stocks and real estate they had accumulated. For their charitable legacy, they named their beloved institution as the beneficiary of their \$75,000 IRA.

Because the Abbey is tax-exempt, the entire \$75,000 will go directly to support its mission. Had Jack and Jill instead left the IRA to their children, nearly \$18,000 would have been lost to federal income taxes, leaving only \$57,000 for their family. Their decision allowed them to care for both their children and the Church in a way that maximized the impact of their lifetime of work and stewardship.

At Subiaco Abbey, we are deeply grateful for friends who prayerfully consider including the Abbey in their plans. Thoughtful giving, rooted in faith, responsibility, and generosity, ensures that the spiritual, educational, and cultural ministries of the Abbey continue to bear fruit for generations to come.

If you would like more information about beneficiary designation gifts or estate planning with the Abbey, please know I am always here to help. Please feel free to call us at 479-847-2718 or email glensing@subi.org, freginald@subi.org, or brfrancis@subi.org.

In the spirit of St. Benedict,

George M. Lensing

Director of Estate and Gift Planning





Maintenance

by Linda Freeman, Director of Development

“If you are going to own a car, you have to expect maintenance and upkeep.” I remember those words of my dad so clearly. In my later teenage years, every time discussion came up about buying a car, my dad would have the same response. Was the lesson that owning a car was a lot of responsibility, extending far beyond the purchase of the vehicle? Was the statement a means of deterring my desire to make such a large purchase by making it clear that the expenses were not always going to be known? Or did he want me to understand that before I took the plunge, I needed to be confident that I was prepared to shift gears to manage the challenges?

Years later, as my own children reached the point of owning a vehicle, I recalled some of the lessons I had learned and thought about ways I could impart this knowledge on them. Thinking deeper about the idea of maintenance, I considered how much our spiritual lives require maintenance. We don't just get baptized as an infant or young child and it's all taken care of. Or reach the stage of confirmation and profess our belief in one, holy, Catholic and apostolic faith and never need to put more into our spiritual engines. There will be parts of us to repair along the way as we break down from the weight of life. We might forget to pray more often than we actually do pray, sort of like forgetting to get the oil changed when it breaks down from overuse. It leaves us with sluggish actions and half-hearted attempts to love and

care for our families and neighbors the way God intended. But once there is new life in our souls through prayer and reconciliation, we feel the presence of God surround us and our spiritual energy soars once again.

As we begin a new year, many people set new goals and resolutions for themselves. Perhaps instead of those being something like traveling more or dieting and exercise, you take time to reflect on the need for spiritual maintenance in your own life. If you feel like your entire engine is blown as some of us do after the overwhelming responsibilities of the holidays, maybe committing yourself to praying the rosary three times a week or spending time in adoration three times a month is a good first step to regaining sacred peace in your life. If the responsibilities and distractions of life are too heavy for you to find time for extra praying, it might be a good time to come away to a place like Subiaco's Coury House for a few days. Here you can become engulfed in the quiet and peacefulness and allow God's voice to fill your day. Schedule some time to talk one-to-one with a monk if you prefer. Rest and relaxation are important elements of maintenance for your soul that can be found through a private retreat.

There are multiple ways for us to practice spiritual maintenance, but just like owning a vehicle, we need to schedule those procedures lest time get away and we experience operational failure. Planning for breakdowns and building funds to



Linda Freeman,
Director of
Development

cover the expenses associated with those is the wise and practical thing to do. The same is true for our spiritual welfare. Strengthen your faith and trust that God will make all things possible so that when things do seemingly fall apart, you can be filled with hope and the belief that your properly maintained spirit, along with God's graces, will lead you through the challenges. And let us know how we can help! Contact Coury House at 479-934-1290 or couryhouse@subi.org to schedule your spiritual maintenance for 2026.

May the peace of God fill your hearts, minds, and souls in the New Year, and may every blessing from above be yours!





Subiaco Academy Fall Semester Highlights

The Golf team competed at the State Golf Tournament at Cooper's Hawk Melbourne on October 6th.

Ms. Karoline Morris took nine students to Dr. Pete's Preview Day on October 10, a unique opportunity for high school juniors and seniors to explore the dynamic world of medicine at Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine. This event provided an insider's look into the life of a medical student and the various paths to a successful medical career.

College Counselor Shelley Applegate and Dr. David Wright took 11 interested seniors to visit Drury University in Springfield, Missouri. On Sunday evening they connected with some Drury admissions staff and a Subiaco alumnus, **Mr. Louis Griesemer (Class of 1973)** to come together and have dinner.

The tennis Trojans won the District Tournament. Luca Lamboy of Fort Smith was the Singles champion with Henry Morrison, also of Fort Smith coming in second place defeated by his teammate. Our doubles team of Julian Gamino and Trevor Wasilewski was second in district.

Julian Gamino was the first Academic All Star recognized for being named a CLT distinguished and regional scholar for scoring in the top 5% of all test takers in the Southwest Region of the United States. A banner was placed in Alumni Hall to designate his distinction.

The Subiaco Cross Country team competed at District on November 3 in Booneville. The senior high team placed 2nd, just two points away from winning first. Elliot Bray placed first overall in the high school division with Alejandro Ramirez and Augustine Tuang placing in the top ten. The Trojan Cross Country team competed at Oaklawn in Hot Springs on November 6. Seven runners competed at the State Cross Country Championships, closing what has been a season full of growth, dedication, and team pride. They faced a lot of strong schools and raced on a challenging course. Subiaco earned a 14th place finish out of 34 teams—a result that reflects the hard work and steady improvement the coaches have seen throughout the season with the athletes.

The National Honor Society tutoring sessions are in full swing. Sessions are available in Alumni Hall each weekday morning from 7:50-8:20; other sessions are available in the library during Enrichment for grades 10-12 on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 1:35-2:15. NHS tutors are also available in the dormitories Sunday through Thursday evening and for one-to-one tutoring by special arrangement with Ms. Goetz. Students requested that the library be open for quiet study on the evenings and on the weekends and this permission was granted and is monitored by upperclassmen. NHS Inductions were held on December 8.

Abbot Elijah has begun the Capstone Colloquium & Integrative Seminar with the seniors. The course overview is as follows: This capstone colloquium and integrative seminar serves as the intellectual and spiritual culmination of a Catholic liberal education at Subiaco. It invites each young man to contemplate the integration of intellect, faith, and virtue in the unfolding of his vocation to discover where God is leading him. Within the fourfold framework of faith, scholarship, character, and brotherhood, students will examine the interplay between reason and revelation, the



Subiaco Academy Fall Semester Highlights

cultivation of moral excellence, and the communal pursuit of truth across multiple subjects. This project will serve as a “snapshot” of their senior year to reflect upon where they have come from, where they are now, and who they are being led to become. As an academic exercise of self-discipline and self-awareness, this project is the culmination of the formation (culmen formationis) of each young man at Subiaco.

The Subiaco Jazz Ensemble has been performing all fall semester. Some performance highlights include Grandparents’ Day, parish festival at St. Boniface, Frontier Days in Paris, La Huerta, the Fiesta of Solidarity (Girls’ Education Matters benefit), the CASA Gala, Merry on Main, basketball games, and for Disabled Veterans at the Tobin Center in North Little Rock.

Lighting of the Hill took place on Monday, December 1. The winter art show was on Sunday, December 14, followed by the annual student Christmas dinner sponsored by the Parents’ Association.



Subiaco Football Trojans Claim State Championship

by Cheryl L. Goetz, Assistant Head of School for Academics and Communication

The Subiaco Trojans defeated the Corning Bobcats on Thursday, November 6, 2025, at the Thone Stadium of Arkansas Tech University to bring home the 3A/4A State 8 Man Football Championship.

The Trojans finished regular season play with a record of 9-1, posting a loss to only one team—Corning. The Trojans came into this game with determination stronger than all season. Each player listened to the coaches and executed plays. The defense took down the Bobcat offense, and the Trojan offense responded with score after score. The result was a 34-0 victory over a team that had defeated them 5 times (3 times soundly) over the past three years. It was a time of exultation for the coaches, the players, and the dedicated fans who have followed them all season.

Head Coach B. J. Applegate, in his second season at Subiaco, stated that the players wanted to win state after their loss in the championship game last year: “They have said all year long they were going to win state, and they believed it.” Applegate also remarked that this team has stood out from other teams he’s coached in that they’ve been a dedicated team—showing up to practice everyday and working hard to learn what the coaches taught them each week on the field and in the film room. They truly wanted to be at practice.

Spectators in the stands noted that the Trojans were on fire the night of the championship game,



looking almost like a different team. When asked what had happened to make them capable of shutting out Corning, Coach Applegate responded, “The loss at home where we had 3 opportunities to score and didn’t; all week we talked about how we outplayed them and lost. I know we went into the game with confidence, and we knew who we had to block and where to make adjustments to help us win. We worked extra hard on the plays that killed us the first time and our defense went in and played like they wanted it more than them.”

Coach Isaac Cotherman is the defensive coordinator and running back coach for the Trojans. Cotherman noted that it was rewarding this season “to see the players become better men by pushing themselves, testing their limits, and doing more than they thought they could.” Cotherman reflected on his time with the four seniors and their growth athletically: “It has been amazing for me to get to see these seniors develop and win a game that many people thought we wouldn’t. And they didn’t just win it, they dominated.”

Alumnus **Ethan Strobel, Class of 2020**, coaches the line for both the offense and defense and the special teams. Once a player, now Strobel spends his time trying to watch all linemen at once to see what is happening to assist them in adjusting for success. According to Strobel, “The most rewarding part



Subiaco Football Trojans Claim State Championship

about coaching this championship team is getting to be part of something that the kids will remember for the rest of their lives. Maybe we coaches passed on some work ethic and memories that will help them.” Coach Strobel says the most challenging thing about coaching is to get to know each student individually and learn to coach him in a way that he responds to best.

When asked what this win meant to him personally, Strobel responded, “Being from Subiaco, attending here, just being part of something that my friends and I always dreamed about, is awesome. I am so proud of these kids and how they fought through everything that was going on in their lives. They grew as a team and learned to trust that their teammates would be where they were supposed to be. Also to turn around and see our whole community and the town come out to support us was an amazing experience.”

Prior to the championship on November 6, it had been a long, dry spell as far as Trojan football championships were concerned. Eighty-three years ago, in 1942, Coach R. K. Reynolds Maus led the Trojans in a 9-0 season in conference play. There was no championship series at that time, but with a record such as that, we must believe they would have persevered! Maus, for whom the Trojan stadium is named, was head coach at Subiaco from 1928-1950.

After the championship game, senior John Crank was

named Player of the Week by the Arkansas Democrat Gazette for his performance in the game. The following students were named as All Conference: Nathan Aquilar, Christian Araujo, Morgan Berg, Collin Cummins, Chris Knox, Aiden Ortega, William Schmitz, Josh Trainor, and Kolby Wilson. Earning All-State honors were John Crank for offense and Landon Koch for defense. Congratulations to the team and Coach Applegate and his staff of Coach Isaac Cotherman and Coach Ethan Strobel along with volunteers Chad Durham and Carl Koch.



Lighting the Way: Alumni Field Project Update

by Tom Canada, Alumni Relations

Subiaco Academy has long been a place where tradition, brotherhood, and excellence shine brightly. Now, thanks to the dedication of alumni, parents, and

friends, that light is about to shine even more—literally—on the Trojan baseball field.

The Baseball Field Lighting Project is one of the Alumni Association’s current special initiatives, overseen by the Board of Directors through the Special Projects Committee. This project will bring permanent lighting to the Academy’s baseball field, allowing players, families, and fans to experience the excitement of Trojan baseball under the lights for the first time in school history.

The addition of lighting will not only enhance the student-athlete experience but also expand opportunities for the entire Subiaco community. Night games will allow more alumni, parents, and supporters to attend without conflict with school or work schedules.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, \$190,000.00+ has already been raised toward the \$215,000 goal. Each contribution represents more than financial support—it reflects a commitment to ensuring that current and future Trojans enjoy facilities that match the pride and tradition of Subiaco athletics. The lights and scoreboard are up and now the fence work begins.

This effort exemplifies what is possible when the Subiaco family comes together in service of the Abbey, the Academy, and its students. With every step forward, the lights on the baseball field will stand as a symbol of unity, brotherhood, and Trojan spirit.

The Enduring Call of the Trojan Brother: Why Alumni Support Matters at Subiaco Academy



Subiaco Academy stands as a place where faith, tradition, and brotherhood converge. For generations, young men have climbed “the Hill” and discovered there not just an education, but a way of life shaped by the Benedictine spirit of prayer, work, hospitality, and community. As alumni, we remain forever connected to that spirit. The formation we received did not end at graduation; it continues to guide our choices, our values, and the men we strive to be. Supporting Subiaco Academy is one of the most meaningful ways we answer the call to uphold the ministry and mission of Subiaco Abbey and honor the monks who dedicated their lives to shaping ours.

The Abbey and Academy poured into us during some of the most crucial years of our development. They challenged us academically, nurtured us spiritually, and gave us a brotherhood that extends across classes and decades. No matter how far we roam from the Arkansas River Valley, a piece of Subiaco

goes with us. Giving back is more than an act of generosity—it is an act of gratitude. It is our way of acknowledging the formation we received in those early years: the discipline learned, the values absorbed, and the friendships that still anchor us. We give because we remember what it felt like to be supported, believed in, and guided by those who saw potential in us before we saw it in ourselves.

But our support is also a promise—one that connects past, present, and future Trojans. The Subiaco experience we cherish today exists because others came before us and chose to invest in it. Dorms were maintained, scholarships were funded, athletic programs were strengthened, and traditions were preserved because alumni and friends of Subiaco believed the next generation deserved the same life-changing experience they once received. Now it is our turn. By giving our time, our resources, and our voice, we help ensure that today’s students walk the same halls

and play on the same fields with the same sense of possibility and belonging that once shaped us.

When we support the next generation of Trojans, we reinforce the unbroken chain of brotherhood that defines Subiaco Academy. We become part of the living legacy of the Abbey’s mission—a legacy that continues to form young men rooted in faith, character, and purpose. In doing so, we not only honor the past, but also help build a future where Subiaco remains a beacon of Benedictine education for decades to come.

Alumni support is not simply about giving—it is about answering a call, honoring a gift, and strengthening a tradition. It is about recognizing that Subiaco Academy made us who we are, and now we have the privilege of helping it shape those who will come after us. Together, we ensure the Benedictine spirit continues to guide young hearts and minds, just as it guided ours.

Connecting and Collaborating

One of the most enjoyable and important aspects of the Subiaco Development and Alumni Offices is the fellowship with alumni and friends who continually support the ministries of the Abbey and Academy. The following is an account of the events from the Fall of 2025 that brought us closer to all those we would be lost without.

September 25—Tom Canada '09, Br. Adrian Strobel '62, and Fr. William Wewers '59 traveled to Arkansas Tech University in Russellville for lunch at St. Leo the Great Catholic Center with some Trojan faithful.



Pictured from left to right: Br. Adrian Strobel '62, Kevin Wewers '07, Nick Schluterman (former employee and son of Matt Schluterman '83) Kyle Wewers '07, Lukas Rainwater '23, Matthew Wewers '23, Tom Canada '09, Bennett Fletcher '23, and Fr. William Wewers '59.



Connecting and Collaborating

October 4—Day Dog Alumni of Subiaco hosted the annual Day Dog Picnic. The event kicked off with mass said by **Fr. Richard Walz '59**. Following mass, a dinner consisting of fried chicken, monk sausage, and sides was prepared and served by **Charlie Kremers '78** and his amazing kitchen staff. A huge shout out to **Isaiah Kury '15** for his leadership as the chairman of the Day Dog Committee and also to **Trey Wright '17** who took on the responsibility of organizing the auctions and even showed off his auctioneer abilities. In all, the event brought in around \$15,000 that will be donated back to Subiaco Academy.



October 14— **Coach Tim Tencleve '76, Br. Adrian Strobel '62, Fr. William Wewers '59, and Tom Canada '09** traveled to Northwest Arkansas for the annual alumni gathering at Fossil Cove Brewing in Fayetteville, AR. Around 15 alumni were there for a time of fellowship as well as a good session of giving Br. Adrian a hard time.



November 13— Volunteer Appreciation—the monks and Development Team hosted volunteers for the Abbey who help with various tasks including stuffing envelopes for mailings, producing peanut brittle, hot sauce and other monk products.

November 15— Members of the monastic community, the Development Team and Subiaco Academy staff attended the annual North Texas gathering. We began with Mass in Lindsay, TX, and then traveled a short distance to Gainesville for dinner and fellowship hosted by **Steve '91** and Misty **Schmitz**, Shane and Karen Lee, and **Dale Schumacher '71**.

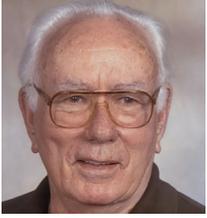


December 7—the annual Christmas Gathering at The Pantry was held in Little Rock, hosted by **Pierson '89** and Nancy **Callahan**. This was the 20th year for the Callahan's to host the event which was attended by seventy alumni and friends visiting with several members of the monastic community and Development Team.



Fr. Jerome Kodell presents Pierson with a gift made by the monks in appreciation of 20 years of hosting the Little Rock Christmas Party.

Sending Brothers Home



† **Lee Roy Schmitz '47**, age 96, of Plano, Texas, passed away October 10, 2025. After high school, he began working in construction with his father in Austin, Texas.

In 1950, he enlisted in the United States Air Force and proudly served during the Korean War as a radio operator aboard the B-36 Peacemaker. Following his military discharge in 1955, Lee Roy worked for National Geophysical and was employed by Collins Radio Company as a transformer tester.



† **Jay Jones '55**, age 88, of Dallas, Texas, passed away August 30, 2025. He attended Laneri High School in Fort Worth. Jay graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1959 with honors in mechanical engineering. He was President of PD Browne Machine Tools, Inc. Jay was also involved with AMTDA (American Machine Tool Distributor Association) on the Board of Directors and with Catholic Charities as a Past-President.



† **Robert Lee Neumeier '65**, age 78, of Fort Smith, Arkansas passed away September 22, 2025. He was an Investment Banker. Robert was a member of Christ the King Catholic Church, a graduate of the University of Arkansas and a U.S. Army Veteran. He was preceded in death by his parents, a son, Brian Neumeier, a sister, Sharon Weinsinger, three brothers **Ed Neumeier '60**, **Nick Neumeier '62** and **Vincent Neumeier '67**.



† **Anthony Leding '68**, age 75, of Fort Smith, Arkansas, passed away October 8, 2025. Over the years, Anthony created fabulous art and architectural designs. He also started a mushroom farm business, selling to grocery stores, and ran his own Christmas tree lot, along with other ventures throughout the years.



† **Carl C. Gruel '70**, age 73, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, passed away September 19, 2025. Carl married in August 1977, and immediately took on responsibility for five of his wife's younger siblings to raise as his own, as their own parents were still in Vietnam. Carl and Le raised their own four children alongside Le's siblings. They worked for many years to bring the rest of Le's family, including her mother and several siblings and their families, from Saigon, Vietnam to Muskogee in 1990. Carl worked for National Steel Erectors Corp. as a project manager.

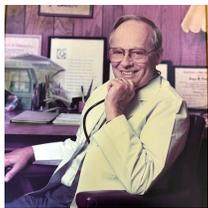


† **Robert F. Stroud, Jr. '71**, age 73, of Mountain View, Missouri, passed away June 25, 2025. Just a few years after graduation, in 1976, he began what would become a distinguished career with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as a firefighter. He relocated to Boise, Idaho, where his creativity and technical acumen designing and prototyping wildfire equipment for the General Services Administration. He is survived by his brother, **Joseph Peace '63** and two sisters.



† **Christopher A. Jasper '75**, age 68, of Cumming, Georgia, passed away October 13, 2025. Chris began his career in electrical engineering at Intel in Oregon, where he was an integral member of the design of the chip that went into the first personal computer. After his work at Intel, he and a few of his friends formed Radisys, a successful telecom software company, where he held several positions. In 1998, he returned to Subiaco to teach at his alma mater. It was there he met Susan and her son Zach. Chris and Susan were married on October 7, 2000. They moved back to Portland in 2001 to return to his engineering work.

Sending Brothers Home



† **Dr. James Matthew Post, Jr.** '42, age 101, of Fort Smith, Arkansas, passed away October 8, 2025. He graduated as World War II began, enlisted in the Navy and was sent to Yale Medical School in New Haven, CT. Upon completion of his medical degree in 1948, he attended the University of Oklahoma in Oklahoma City for his Pediatric Residency. He became a Fort Smith baby-doctor legend as he took care of many youngsters during his 45 years of practice. He was on the professional staff at St. Edward's Mercy Hospital, Sparks Regional Medical Center, and Crawford County Hospital. He served as President of the Sebastian County Medical Society in 1969 and was a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Arkansas Medical Society.

New and Improved!

by Fr. Patrick Boland, OSB, Guestmaster & Director of Coury House

“New and Improved” has become a popular catchphrase in modern marketing. Everything seems to need an upgrade to capture your attention and encourage you to spend your money. While I may not fully subscribe to that philosophy, I do recognize the importance of regularly evaluating our practices and making necessary improvements in our spiritual, personal, and professional lives.

The Coury House has been using the same property management system for over 15 years. Although it has served us well, we identified a need to streamline our booking, payment, and reporting processes. On November 1st, we soft-launched a new property management system developed by Retreat Guru, a company with over 20 years of experience in the industry. This new system will primarily help us reduce costs while still providing our guests with quality and hopefully enhanced personal and group registration experiences at the Coury House.

With the updated Abbey and Academy website, guests can access our hospitality page by clicking on “Visit Us” to find options for Day Trips, Retreats, and Tours. We aim to modernize the process of requesting a retreat or visit to Subiaco Abbey, making it similar to booking a hotel room for private stays. This new system gives retreat group leaders greater control over room bookings and modifications for their participants. The system also features an easy way to pay invoices, make donations to the Abbey, and provide valuable feedback to our Guest Services Staff.

We are thrilled to finally launch this system after nearly a year of deliberation and design. As always, you can reach us at 479-934-1290 for that personal touch of a friendly voice.

Upcoming Retreats in 2026

January

- 16-18 11-Step Retreat “Gus to God!”
- 30-Feb. 1 Going Deeper Together Women 1.0 w/Dr. Gary Oliver

February

- 9-12 The Abbey Quilters
- 13-15 World Wide Marriage Encounter
- 20-22 Men's Retreat w/St. Joseph's of Conway

March

- 2-5 Going Deeper Together Men 1.0 w/Dr. Gary Oliver
- 9-13 Natalie's Stitching Addiction Quilters
- 13-15 Diocesan Council of Black Catholics



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, call the Coury House at 479-934-1290 or email couryhouse@subi.org

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