By Allan Burke

St. Mary’s Church at Assumption Abbey, Richardton, was filled with mourners for the funeral Mass for Abbot Brian Wangler, OSB, 73, on Tuesday, May 30, 2017. He died Thurs., May 25, at a Richardton care facility.

He was the eighth abbot to lead the monastery and the first to die while an abbot. In addition to family members and friends and fellow monks, at the Mass were Bishop David A. Kagan of the Diocese of Bismarck; priests and deacons from the diocese; Abbot John Klassen, OSB of St. John’s Abbey, Collegeville, Minn.; Benedictines from other communities; other religious, and members of St. Mary’s, St. Thomas and St. Stephen’s parishes.

Burial was in the Assumption Abbey Cemetery.

Fr. Valerian Odermann, OSB celebrated the 1:30 p.m. Mass of Christian Burial for Abbot Brian.

Fr. Valerian said, “Yes, his name was George... The name could’ve been Brian.”

He added that being able to say “sorry” reminded him of comments made by Abbot Brian at a conference this past Lent when the abbot said, “Within me is a push to be at peace with people. Face the issue and be at peace. Life is easier that way.” Abbot Brian continued, “One time a lady accused me of hurting her friend rather badly and thereby, hurting her. I could not figure out what I had done wrong, and I was determined not to apologize for something I did not do. After about a half year and talking with the lady twice about the situation, I decided to cave-in and apologize for actions which, in my opinion, I did not do. I figured, ‘why can I not apologize if it will help someone else.’

“She immediately accepted the apology and things were good between us. In that situation I had to reflect on whether or not I could humiliate myself for the sake of someone else and not be damaged emotionally.”

Fr. Valerian noted, “That incident captures the tone of what Abbot Brian strove to be—for What will separate

In Memoriam

Abbot Brian Wangler, OSB
October 19, 1943
May 25, 2017
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