

# Monks pursue cloistered life in midst of city

IRVING (AP) — They live across the highway from glitzy Texas Stadium, in a nondescript brick building that seems out of place, out of touch and out of time.

Inside the abbey, which lies hidden behind scrubby mesquite trees along State Highway 114 in Irving, a cadre of monks contemplate the spiritual in the midst of the earthly. The post-modern towers of Las Colinas are nudging in from the west and the incessant noise of highway traffic intrudes from the south.

It is an unlikely place to find 27 Cistercian monks, all of whom have taken the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. In a society fueled by narcissistic excess, the men of Our Lady of Dallas Cistercian Abbey have chosen personal restraint and denial.

They own nothing, not the robes they wear nor the pens they write with. Everything is provided for them. Cistercians live a regulated, restrictive life, but they are permitted to leave the abbey one night a week. To that extent, they differ from Trappist monks, who also are Cistercians, but are strictly cloistered.

"This house lives a much more on-the-go life than other (monastic communities)," said Father Timothy Coble, 27, the youngest of the monks and a former student of Texas A&M. "We go to the movies, theater, the symphony. We participate in the cultural life of the city."

Coble, a Fort Worth native, attended high school in Mansfield. He was majoring in wildlife management at A&M when he became interested in becoming a monk.

When he was a sophomore at the University one of his friends, who was deeply religious, died. Coble said the friend's death affected him profoundly, and when he visited the abbey during spring break, he decided he wanted to be a monk.

He, as do all those who want to become monks, spent one year living in the monastery. Any time during this year they are free to leave or they may be asked to leave. Following a successful trial period, the monks begin another three-year stay in the monastery, which is usually spent finishing their college work. After that, they begin another three-year tenure, during which most monks will take the final vows.

Coble took his solemn vows, the final step in becoming a monk, last September. Father Ans Elm Nagy, the abbot, said Coble is only the fifth person to join the Dallas monastery since it was established in 1957.

Nagy, 71, came to the United States from Hungary in 1946, because the government was trying to suppress religious orders. He first lived in an abbey near Milwaukee, but in 1955 he and a group of other

Hungarian monks moved to Dallas to help start the University of Dallas.

Work started on the monastery in 1957, and five years later, the Cistercian Preparatory School opened. The preparatory school, with a current enrollment of about 300 students, is one of the most academically rigorous schools in Dallas.

"We are a teaching community," Nagy said of the Cistercians. "We have monks teaching at the University of Dallas and in the prep school."

Coble, who holds a bachelor's degree in biology and a master's degree in theology from the University of Dallas, will teach science at Cistercian in the fall, he said. He also is a Latin scholar and is learning Greek.

The daily routines of the monks are similar. Coble gets up each morning at about 5 a.m., dresses in his black and white habit and spends a few moments in prayer and reading. At 6:30 a.m. all the monks congregate in the chapel for prayer.

Following this, they gather in the dining room for breakfast. Most of the monks leave the monastery by 8 a.m. for classes at the university or the preparatory school.

The monks break at noon for lunch and follow that with mid-day prayer. After classes are over at 3:30 p.m., Coble said he usually goes jogging or runs personal errands.

They gather again in the chapel at 5:45 p.m. for prayer and then immediately go eat dinner. The last formal prayer gathering of the day is at 6:40 p.m. Nights are spent reading alone in their rooms, watching television — The Cosby Show is their favorite — or taking in a movie, play or symphony.

Coble said he avoids sexually explicit movies, but it is not unheard of for a monk to go to an R-rated movie.

Father Bernard Marton, headmaster of the prep school and a monk, said in today's society it is no longer possible to wall in a monastery to keep out the world.

"We don't flee the world," Marton said. "You cannot run from evil and temptation."

Coble said theirs is a spiritual marriage to the Catholic church and the Christian faith that few outside the faith can understand.

Their heads are not shaved, and while robes are worn within the monastery, most wear the Roman collar outside. All are Catholic priests as well as monks.

Coble said he is proud of his calling, and when in public, he wants people to know who he is — a monk and a priest.

"It (the monastic calling) is a very special and beautiful gift and it would be denying myself if I kept that a secret," he said. "Part of the real joy is to have it known."

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<p><b>TAU KAPPA EPSILON</b></p> <p>Tues. 9-2 Open Party Fri. Open Party Wed. 9-10 Open Party Thur. 9-11 Smoker *Sat. 9-13 Party</p>	<p><b>SIGMA ALPHA MU</b></p> <p>Sun. 8-31 Open Party Fri. 9-5 Smoker, Party Sat. 9-6 Open Party *Fri. 9-12 Smoker, Party Sat. 9-13 Party</p>	<p><b>DELTA UPSILON</b></p> <p>Thur. 9-4 Open Party Sun. 9-7 Smoker Thur. 9-11 Open Party Sun. 9-14 Smoker</p>	
<p><b>THETA CHI</b></p> <p>Thur. 9-4 Generic Mexican Party Sat. 9-6 Casino Party Wed. 9-10 Smoker Thur. 9-11 Reach the Beach Seafood Party Sat. 9-13 Smoker Sun. 9-14 Smoker</p>	<p><b>PI KAPPA PHI</b></p> <p>Sat. 8-30 Open Party Mon. 9-1 Smoker Thur. 9-4 Open Party Sat. 9-6 Smoker Wed. 9-10 Smoker Fri. 9-12 Open Party</p>	<p><b>DELTA CHI</b></p> <p>Thurs. 9-4 Open Party *Sat. 9-6 Smoker Mon. 9-8 Open Party *Wed. 9-10 Smoker Fri. 9-12 Open Party *Sat. 9-13 Smoker</p>	
<p><b>KAPPA ALPHA</b></p> <p>Sat. 8-30 Open Party Thur. 9-4 Smoker Sat. 9-6 Virgin Islands *Sun. 9-7 A Trip to the Races Wed. 9-10 Smoker *Thur. 9-11 A Night in Monte Carlo Sat. 9-13 Fish Fry</p>	<p><b>BETA THETA PI</b></p> <p>Sat. 8-30 Open Party Wed. 9-3 Smoker Thur. 9-4 Open Party Sat. 9-6 Pool Party Wed. 9-10 Open Party *Fri. 9-12 Date Party</p>	<p><b>ALPHA TAU OMEGA</b></p> <p>Tues. 9-2 Casino Party Thur. 9-4 Mardis Gras Mon. 9-8 Smoker Thur. 9-11 Club Paradise Sat. 9-13 Video Party Sun. 9-14 Smoker</p>	
<p><b>PHI GAMMA DELTA (FIJI)</b></p> <p>Wed. 9-3 Prohibition Party Fri. 9-5 Smoker *Sat. 9-6 Date Party Sun. 9-7 Smoker *Wed. 9-10 Island Party *Thur. 9-11 Happy Hour (El Toro) *Sat. 9-13 Coat &amp; Tie *Sun. 9-14 Skeet Shoot</p>	<p><b>PHI DELTA THETA</b></p> <p>Sun. 8-31 19th Amendment Party Mon. 9-1 Pool Party Wed. 9-3 Casino Night Thur. 9-4 Slide Show Fri. 9-5 Party Sat. 9-6 Road Trip Mon. 9-8 Monday Night Football Sat. 9-13 A&amp;M vs LSU Party</p>	<p><b>SIGMA CHI</b></p> <p>Sat. 8-30 Welcome Back Aggies Tues. 9-2 Ice Cream Social Fri. 9-5 Pool Party Sat. 9-6 Volleyball &amp; Bar B-Q Mon. 9-8 Football &amp; Pizza *Wed. 9-10 Coat &amp; Tie *Fri. 9-12 Skeet Shoot *Mon. 9-15 Smoker</p>	
<p><b>SIGMA NU</b></p> <p>Sun. 8-31 Prohibition Party Mon. 9-1 Cornona Party Thur. 9-4 No Control *Fri. 9-5 Riverboat Wed. 9-10 Smoker Fri. 9-12 Party</p>	<p><b>KAPPA SIGMA</b></p> <p>Sat. 8-30 South Seas Party Thur. 9-4 Open Party Sat. 9-6 Open Party Thurs. 9-11 Open Party Sat. 9-13 Open Party</p>	<p><b>PHI KAPPA TAU</b></p> <p>Wed. 9-3 Open Party Fri. Luau *Sun. 9-7 Champagne *Wed. 9-10 Pizza Party Fri. Late Night w/No One in Particular *Sat. 9-13 Summerville Ski Trip</p>	
<p><b>FRATERNITY ALPHA TAU OMEGA</b> <b>BETA THETA PI</b> <b>DELTA CHI</b> <b>DELTA UPSILON</b> <b>FARM HOUSE</b> <b>KAPPA ALPHA</b> <b>KAPPA SIGMA</b></p>	<p><b>CONTACTS</b> <b>TONY FLOWER</b> (409) 775-7482 <b>JERRY PRICE</b> (409) 846-2883 <b>ARRIEL TARRAGO</b> (409) 846-5053 <b>DOUG RUCKLE</b> (409) 696-0130 <b>JEFF WRIGHT</b> (409) 263-0217 <b>BLAKE HARRISON</b> (409) 693-2575 <b>RON HOLSEY</b> (409) 822-7500</p>	<p><b>PI KAPPA ALPHA</b> <b>PI KAPPA PHI</b> <b>SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON</b> <b>SIGMA ALPHA MU</b> <b>SIGMA CHI</b> <b>SIGMA NU</b> <b>SIGMA PHI EPSILON</b></p>	<p><b>KIRBY STERNFELS</b> (713) 774-7047 <b>PARKER SMITH</b> (409) 836-7737 <b>KYLE KERBOW</b> (409) 693-1081 <b>BRIAN MENDELSON</b> (409) 696-1472 <b>JACK PHILLIPS</b> (409) 693-3372 <b>BILL DESPAIN</b> (409) 764-6525 <b>SCOTT KELLR</b> (409) 846-2049</p>
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