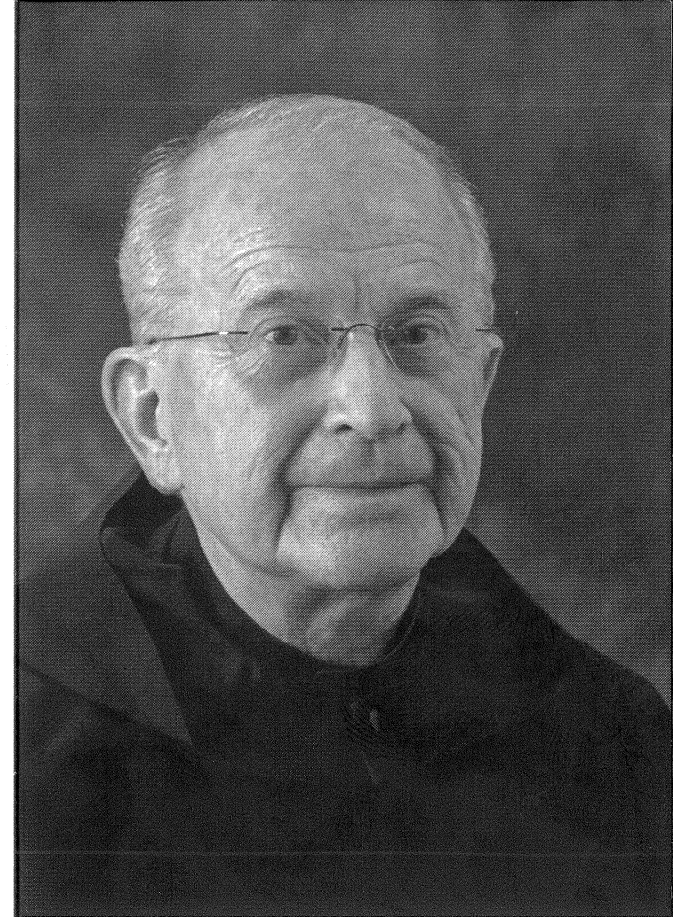


Father Jerome was a very early riser, and he loved to nurture his spirit by taking long walks in the predawn hours. During these excursions, he would often encounter wildlife to the envy of his confreres.

Father Jerome died on June 22, 2019, in the retirement center at Saint John's Abbey. He is survived by his sister, Mary Helen Trisko of Arden Hills, nieces and nephews, and the community at Saint John's Abbey. The monks, family, and friends will celebrate the Mass of Christian Burial for Father Jerome on June 28 at 3:30 p.m. in Saint John's Abbey and University Church with interment in Saint John's Cemetery following the service.

We ask each community member to offer two Masses according to the manner of his participation in the priesthood of Christ. We commend our brother Jerome to your prayers.

*Abbot John Klassen OSB  
and the monks of Saint John's Abbey*



## Father Jerome Coller OSB

Monk of Saint John's Abbey  
Collegeville, Minnesota

*Born: 6 February 1929, Professed: 11 July 1955,  
Ordained: 6 June 1959, Died: 22 June 2019*

## *Father Jerome Thomas Coller OSB*

Thomas Coller was the second of three children born to Walter and Helen (Kretz) Coller in Saint Paul, Minnesota, on February 6, 1929. His father, a mining engineer and metallurgist, and his mother were both of German-Catholic backgrounds. Thomas attended Saint Luke's Elementary School (1933–1942) and then enrolled in Saint Thomas Academy in Saint Paul (1942–1946).

Thomas continued his education at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, graduating with a B.A. (1949) and M.A. in music (1954). After completing the year-long novitiate where he took the name, Jerome, he made his first vows in 1955 as a monk of Saint John's Abbey and continued his seminary studies at Saint John's concluding with ordination to the priesthood in 1959. Following ordination Father Jerome was appointed abbey organist and choir director. He also taught theology and Gregorian chant at Saint John's University until 1963. Father Jerome made his debut as a pianist at Saint John's by performing Rachmaninoff's *Third Piano Concerto* in the Saint John's University auditorium in March 1963. During his musical career he also appeared as a soloist with the University of Minnesota Symphony and gave recitals over the KUOM Minnesota radio station.

In 1963 he was appointed to the Benedictine monastery of San Antonio Abad in Humacao, Puerto Rico, where he taught religion and music in both their grade and high schools. In 1965 he was assigned to Moorhead as the Newman Center chaplain for Moorhead State University and assistant pastor at Saint Joseph's Church.

Beginning in 1968, he began graduate studies at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, and was awarded the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in composition in 1971. He then returned to Saint John's where he taught music theory, music composition, and piano until 1998. During those years, he held numerous solo piano recitals, performed in the faculty chamber ensemble, Pastiche, and composed many works for the liturgy as well as for solo piano, clarinet and piano, and saxophone and piano. He served as chair of the music department from 1973 until 1977.

Father Jerome was a consummate concert pianist and composer. His creative compositional musical talents culminated in liturgical pieces to be performed by the Saint John's Abbey monastic community. Some of these were simple and uplifting, and others were richly complex in rhythm and harmony and therefore not always so easy to perform. In 1988 Father Jerome presented a "first" in the musical history of the abbey: an "Experimental

Computer Music Office" that was met with mixed reviews.

Father Jerome's homilies were always meticulously prepared and delivered with a theatrical flair that was his hallmark. His love of performance was thus as evident in his sermon deliveries as it was in his musical expression.

He won several awards during his musical career. Among them were first place in the Schubert Club Scholarship competition in 1949 (Saint Paul), the Alpha Phi Omega Composition Award in 1950, and the Otto Stahl Piano Award from his alma mater at Cornell University in 1971.

He was a regular parish weekend assistant in the Twin Cities throughout his busy monastic and professional life. In 2004 he took on the job of abbey stipendarius, collating Mass requests for special intentions. He also accompanied Divine Office as assistant organist beginning as early as the 1970s.

Gardening was one of Father Jerome's hobbies, and for many summers he managed a small flower garden immediately outside the south entrance to the abbey Breuer wing, thus complementing his artistic musical contributions with some of nature's own stunning visual array.