The Patrick Cummins lecture series was founded in honor of Father Patrick Cummins, a monk of Conception Abbey, who served in a variety of capacities, but earned his reputation as a well-renowned Scripture scholar. It is in his honor and name that a different speaker is selected each year to give a lecture to the monks, seminarians and guests of Conception Abbey and Seminary College.

This year's guest speaker was Rabbi Alan Cohen. Rabbi Cohen has 35 years of experience as rabbi in various congregations from Florida, to South Carolina, to Kansas City. For the last 19 years, he has served as Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom in Kansas City, and most recently moved to Overland Park. Rabbi Cohen was accompanied on this occasion by his wife, Linda Cohen.

Rabbi Cohen was asked to address the seminarians on what he would like them to know about Judaism. He spoke about the history of Jewish-Christian relations and how the dialogue has really made miraculous progress. He emphasized our common ground, quoting Pope John Paul II's comment referring to the Jewish community as our "elder brothers and sisters." He affirmed that the dialogue made tremendous progress due to the work of John Paul II. We have seen that every trip outside Rome of Pope Benedict XVI has included a visit to a synagogue, continuing the spirit of Pope John Paul II.

Rabbi Cohen spoke of the great commandment which is love of God. He assured that it does not stop there, but is immediately carried out into the realm of love of neighbor. He encouraged those present to identify the injustices in our world and those who suffer in order to make a difference. Rabbi Cohen asserted his belief that we are on the earth to make it a better place and we can see through history where humanity has both succeeded and failed.

He affirmed that his belief in God helps him be a better human being. He can recognize that others are created in the same image and likeness of God, whom he is to love.

A question and answer session followed the talk. The seminarians were eager to ask questions. Afterwards, a social was held in the Alumni Union where monks, seminarians and guests were able to continue the discussion and meet Rabbi Cohen.

A group of the seminarians and monks were able to visit Rabbi Cohen last spring during the time of Passover at the synagogue of Beth Shalom in Kansas City. The friendship between Conception Abbey and the Jewish community of Kansas City was yet again able to be strengthened and continued on this occasion.