

# Abbey

magazine



*Prayers  
Rise  
Like  
Incense*

The Norbertine Way of Life

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Why We Do What We Do

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“PRAYER SUSTAINS MY WORK AND MINISTRY.  
WORK AND MINISTRY MATURE MY PRAYER.”

## From the Abbot

**The Rule of St. Benedict, which laid the foundations for monastic life, promotes “*Ora et Labora*”—prayer and work as a pattern for the early religious. That focus would be adopted and adapted through the centuries.**

One would not be far off in suggesting that it is a pattern for most people: we pray and work, with work as our dominant activity. As a child I attended Mass with my family on Sunday and during the week with my grade school classmates. We prayed the rosary as a family in October and were fairly faithful to mealtime and bedtime prayers. But they were often an afterthought or something we had to be reminded to do.

Upon joining the Norbertines, I was introduced to a new and challenging cycle. Prayer became a central focus of our common life. We were instructed in prayer, both private and communal. As is true today, there are regular periods of communal prayer scattered throughout the day. Norbertines chant the Divine Office—a commitment, but what it adds to prayer has been remarkable for me. While not all of us have singing voices, we still can make a joyful song unto the Lord.

The true lifelong challenge is to have a balance with the active and contemplative parts of our lives. The pendulum without difficulty swings—easily to

work but with less time for prayer, personal and private. But one soon realizes when that balance is gone; I must pray daily, quietly and collectively. Prayer sustains my work and ministry. Work and ministry mature my prayer.

The order’s mission statement reflects that focus and challenge: *“Our way of life is marked by a life-long seeking after God through fraternal community; a never-ending conversion by giving ourselves to the Church of our profession in communion with the self-emptying of Christ; in imitation of Mary pondering God’s Word; and in ceaseless prayer and services at the altar. From the choir and altar we go to serve the human family in a spirit of simplicity, hospitality, reconciliation, and peace for the benefit of the Church and the world, especially where Christ is found among the poor, the suffering, and among those who do not know Him.”*

St. Augustine has his own take: *“Order your soul; reduce your wants; live in charity; associate in Christian community; obey the laws; trust in Providence. Leave a little room for reflection, room for silence too. Enter into yourself and leave behind all noise and confusion. Look within yourself.”*

*Gary Neville, O.Praem.*



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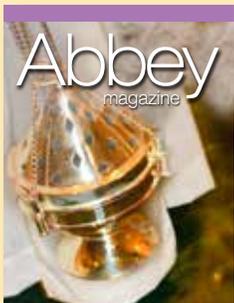
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The St. Norbert Abbey thurible offers a fragrant sacrifice of praise.



Mass on the Solemnity of St. Augustine, celebrating the Solemn Profession of Frater Michael Brennan, O. Praem.

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# The Worshipping Person

By Fr. John Bostwick, O. Praem. Translated by Sr. Guadalupe Muñoz

*“It is not enough to **say** prayers; one must become, **be** prayer, prayer incarnate. It is not enough to have moments of praise. All of life, each act, every gesture, even the smile of the human face, must become a hymn of adoration. An offering, a prayer. One should offer not what one has, but what one is.”<sup>1</sup>*

People have tried to summarize what makes the human person unique: **Homo Sapiens** (the thinking person) or **Homo Faber** (the making or creative person). But perhaps the most profound truth from a spiritual perspective is often given the least attention: the human being is **Homo Adorans**—the worshipping person. This stance of worship, of adoration, precisely defines the proper relationship between the human being and the Creator. All we are and all we do is to en flesh this fundamental attitude of reverence, praise, and thanksgiving to God. In this sense the human being is “priest,” receiving all from God and offering all back to God.<sup>2</sup>

The image of the human person as worshipper or priest is most clearly made manifest in the Church’s formal worship, the Liturgy: the Mass, the Divine Office, and the sacraments. But this identity also embraces multiple other manners of prayer, from communal devotions like Eucharistic Adoration to personal devotions including the rosary and other more individual acts of piety.

Yet *being* prayer, *living* prayer, the human being as worshipper transcends what we typically define as religious activity. The Church Fathers spoke of the “liturgy after the Liturgy.” Our reverence for God overflows into reverence and active care for one another, actively loving our fellow human beings. The works of mercy are the works of God, who entrusted them to us. And they are as much acts of adoration as whatever we do in church.

# La Persona Que Da Culto

Por Padre John Bostwick, O. Praem. Traducido por Hermana Guadalupe Muñoz

*“No es suficiente **decir** oraciones; uno necesita llegar a **ser**, ser oración, la oración encarnada. No es suficiente tener unos momentos de alabanza. Toda la vida, cada acto, cada gesto, aún la sonrisa en la cara humana, tiene que llegar a ser un himno de adoración. Una ofrenda, una oración. Uno debería ofrecer no lo que uno tiene, sino más bien lo que uno es.”<sup>1</sup>*

Personas han intentado resumir lo que hace a la persona humana singular: **Homo Sapiens** (la persona que piensa) o **Homo Faber** (la persona creativa, que hace). Pero tal vez la verdad más profunda desde una perspectiva espiritual muchas veces se le da la menor atención: el ser humano es **Homo Adorans**—la persona que adora. Esta actitud de culto, de adoración, precisamente define la relación propia entre el ser humano y el Creador. Todo lo que somos y todo lo que hacemos es encarnar esta actitud fundamental de reverencia, alabanza, y acción de gracias a Dios. En este sentido el ser humano es “sacerdote,” recibiendo todo de Dios y ofreciendo todo a Dios de nuevo.<sup>2</sup>

La imagen de la persona humana como adorador o sacerdote se hace manifiesta más claramente en el culto formal de la Iglesia, la Liturgia: la Misa, el Oficio Divino, y los sacramentos. Pero esta identidad también abraza múltiples maneras de orar, desde devociones comunales como Adoración Eucarística hasta devociones personales incluyendo el rosario y otros actos de piedad más individuales.

Sin embargo *siendo* oración, oración *viva*, el ser humano como adorador trasciende lo que típicamente definimos como actividad religiosa. Los Padres de la Iglesia hablaron de la “liturgia después de la Liturgia.” Nuestra reverencia para Dios rebosa en reverencia y cuidado activo de uno para el otro, activamente amando a nuestros seres humanos compañeros. Las obras de misericordia son las obras de Dios, quien los confió a nosotros. Además ellas son actos de adoración tanto como cualquier cosa que hacemos en la iglesia.

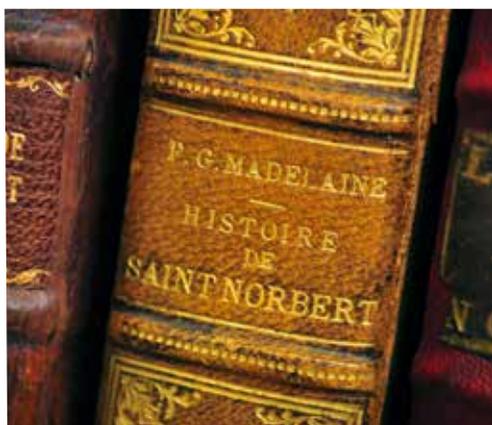
<sup>1</sup>Paul Evdomikov. *The Sacrament of Love*. St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 2011.

<sup>2</sup>Alexander Schmemmann. *For the Life of the World*. St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1973.

*The Canons Regular of Prémontré  
strive to maintain a balance  
between **contemplation** and **action**—  
community life and apostolic service.*

# *A Blend of Contemplation and Action* The Norbertine Way of Life

*By Fr. David Komatz, O. Praem.*



Norbert of Xanten founded the Norbertine Order in AD 1121 in the valley of Prémontré, France.

Novices join abbey leadership after vestition.



Recently a Jewish friend of mine posed the question, “I know about Franciscans and Jesuits. What does it mean to be a Norbertine?”

It is not surprising that she was aware of the Franciscans and the Jesuits. After all, they are two of the largest religious communities in the world. However, she was surprised to learn that there are more than 300 Catholic religious communities of men and women in the U.S. alone! Each community has its own history, tradition, and **charism**: the set of qualities that forms the identity and mission of a particular group.

Which brings us back to her original question: *What does it mean to be a Norbertine?*



# Contemplation and Action

Founded by Norbert of Xanten in the valley of Prémontré, France, in AD 1121, the Norbertine Order ranks among the five oldest religious orders in the world. Our communities include ordained priests, bishops, and solemnly professed brothers and sisters of the Roman Catholic Church.

We live together in community within priories and abbeys under the leadership of an abbot, yet serve the world in active ministry, involving ourselves in apostolic activities outside of our houses. We strive to live with the tensions that are associated with the relationship between contemplation and action—community life and apostolic service. We profess:

**POVERTY**, which demands simplicity of life and the sharing of our lives and talents with each other and those with whom we minister;

**CONSECRATED CELIBACY**, which opens us to growth in the Holy Spirit in union with others;

**OBEDIENCE**, which opens us as fully as possible to God's will.

As “canons regular” we are a religious order, living in community, under a rule (“regula” in Latin) detailing regulations by which religious communities should function. In our case, we embrace the Rule of St. Augustine, which aids us in living an orderly, somewhat predictable pattern of transparency. Most importantly, we are dedicated to the dignified and public celebration of the Eucharist and the chanted Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Office) in choir each day. Towards that end, our first and most paramount “apostolate” is to be engaged in the liturgical life of the Church. It is our responsibility and honor to pray consistently for each other and the People of God. This is what gives life to our fraternity and is the firm foundation that empowers us to leave our home each day to be engaged in ministry with the Faithful.

By virtue of our baptismal call and by means of our vowed life as canons regular, we venture beyond the abbey confines to serve the needs of the local Church through our common ministry to the poor and the marginalized, the young and the old. Locally, this ministry finds expression in our educational apostolates on the



Novice master Fr. David Komatz, O. Praem. (left), shares a light moment with Frater Anh Tran, O. Praem. (center), and Frater Johnathan Turba, O. Praem., as they learn how Norbertine life remains “ever ancient, ever new.”

*Continued from page 5*

elementary, secondary, and collegiate levels. Norbertines serve in these institutions as teachers, professors, administrators, counselors, campus ministers, financial officers, and in governance as board members and trustees.

We also serve in parishes entrusted to the order, and provide pastoral assistance to pastors of diocesan parishes. Our men are engaged in sacramental celebration and pastoral care at area healthcare facilities, including hospitals, nursing homes, and prisons. Closer to home, some of our men minister to the Norbertine community itself as abbot, prior, house superior, financial manager, and directors of formation and vocation.

On that Christmas night in AD 1121, Norbert held before those who joined him in this mission the dream of the first Christians after Pentecost, whose community life was characterized by the power of the Holy Spirit and a desire to be of service to others. Certainly unique in comparison to other religious charisms, this dynamic is still alive and well, and sustains us as we advance the mission of our founders ... bringing Christ to a waiting world.



Premonstratensian chant, unique to the Norbertine Order, enhances daily liturgical life | Original vellum page of 16th-century manuscript



Visit [www.norbertines.org](http://www.norbertines.org) for more information about apostolates founded or assumed by the Norbertine Order that are sponsored by St. Norbert Abbey.

# Liturgy: Where Christ's Love Lives

How popular devotion and private prayer lead us back to the liturgy

By Gina Sanders Larsen

*Abbey Magazine* is published twice a year to share the breadth and depth of Norbertine spirituality in Wisconsin and the world. Multicultural parishes, Peruvian medical mission work, a centuries-old liturgical musical tradition, and even a continuing connection with the Green Bay Packers all have graced recent covers. These ministries are imbued with the enthusiasm and energy that can only rightly come from Jesus Christ. The objective always has been to invite readers to join the Norbertines in prayer, ministry, and discernment, not only to strengthen their collective work but also to fortify a personal relationship with God.

Fr. Tim Shillcox, O. Praem., engages the Faithful in the "source" and "summit" of the Church's mission.

Such ministries of love and mercy must themselves spring forth from a source even more powerful. That source, for the Norbertine Order and individual believers, is liturgy. Norbertines gather at St. Norbert Abbey in prayer to be fortified to go out into the world and serve. Just as a family returns home to the evening dinner table, so they return to evening liturgy to gather strength and courage for the days ahead. Liturgy is truly *"the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all power flows."*<sup>1</sup>

Liturgy is truly *“the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all power flows.”*

Liturgy, generally defined, is the structured ritual according to which religious worship is conducted based on scripture and tradition. The intended result is a globally consistent celebration of the Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, and the sacraments that is still made manifest by Jesus Christ Himself in this day, in His humanity. Liturgy is written and passed down. Fr. Michael Gilligan of American Catholic Press expresses it beautifully:

*“Every celebration of the liturgy, every Mass, every gathering for Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer, and every sacrament is a sacred action more important than anything else the Church does. This is so because the liturgy is something that is done both by Christ the Priest and his Body, the Church. Nothing else we do can be more intimately bound up with Jesus Christ himself.”<sup>2</sup>*

While reflecting nuances of a specific time or place, liturgy nevertheless is powerful, recorded, and unchanging. It is the central and primary activity of the Catholic faith and the natural destination to which popular devotion and private prayer flow.

### **The Origins of Popular Devotions**

Many faithful Catholics, Norbertines included, partake in popular devotions, the descriptor meaning “of the people,”

not necessarily a measure of their current fashion. Popular devotions—whether they are the Stations of the Cross, praying the rosary, Eucharistic Adoration, or Marian devotions—are external expressions of piety that exist at the crossroads of culture and the Catholic faith. In these rites and prayers, there is greater freedom of expression to suit individual tastes and needs of particular groups. Although not officially scripted by the Church, and always subordinate to the Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, and the sacraments, are additional settings where the dedicated faithful find life and expression.

The roots of many devotional practices are fascinating. Unlike the sacraments, they cannot be traced directly back to Jesus and His apostles. The rosary finds its origins in religious orders’ recitation of the entire 150 Psalms. Throughout the decades, people, many of them illiterate, substituted 150 memorized Hail Marys for the psalms, and the earliest form of the rosary became known as “Our Lady’s Psalter.” The rosary actually began as a miniature psalter. The Stations of the Cross represent a pilgrimage formulated from early Christendom’s attempt to visit the scenes of Christ’s Passion. Those unable to travel the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem eventually created the path to Calvary in spirit, and now Catholic



Fr. Matthew Dougherty, O. Praem., blesses the congregation at Benediction.



The Eighth Station: Jesus meets the women, as portrayed at Our Lady of Lourdes, De Pere | Photo by Fr. Tim Shillcox, O. Praem.

## The life of Norbertines is structured around the liturgy, and the liturgy, in turn, fuels their work.



churches feature 14 prayerful stops in remembrance of Christ's last day on earth before His Resurrection.

Popular devotions came as a result of many factors, including the lack of sufficient numbers of priests to meet the liturgical needs of the people. When a priest is not present, devotions can still be practiced by the faithful. Emotions and faith provoke in some people a need to demonstrate devotion to a story or person within Church history, including devotions practiced by certain ethnic groups or local churches. At other times, as in the example of the rosary, the simpler form makes it more accessible. Others wish to imitate or honor those who do good work or who are venerated for their holiness. Understanding the piety of a particular group of people helps others understand their particular spiritual needs and gifts. God created us beautifully in His image, and in such beautiful and varied ways He is made real.

### Where Devotions Meet Liturgy

Whereas devotions promote the faith of the people, they must be in harmony with the liturgy, drawing inspiration from it, and ultimately leading back to it.<sup>3</sup> For instance, perpetual adoration is a meaningful meditation on the Holy Eucharist; however, within adoration one does not experience the blessing, transformation, and reception of Christ's

Body and Blood. Where the Body of Christ is broken and poured out at Mass, we are, too. Mass is the only place where we fully partake in Christ who sustains us.

We experience the death of Jesus as we walk the Stations of the Cross, yet at Mass we experience the fullness of life through the Paschal Mystery: His life, death, and Resurrection. Just as Mary and every saint point us to Jesus Christ, so every popular devotion should leave us somewhat unfulfilled and pointed toward Mass. St. John Paul II explained the relationship between devotions and liturgy this way:

*"Genuine forms of popular piety, expressed in a multitude of different ways, derive from the faith and, therefore, must be valued and promoted. Such authentic expressions of popular piety are not at odds with the centrality of the Sacred Liturgy. Rather, in promoting the faith of the people, who regard popular piety as a natural religious expression, they predispose the people for the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries."<sup>4</sup>*

We must be careful not to mix devotional practices, hymns, or prayers within the liturgy to form a hybrid celebration that falls outside the Church's official liturgical practices.



Just as Mary and every saint point us to Jesus Christ, so every popular devotion should leave us somewhat unfulfilled and pointed toward Mass.



Norbertines' devotion to Mary is expressed in many ways.

The two practices should be kept separate, with the liturgy influencing devotional practice, not vice versa.

### **The Role of Private Prayer**

Thoughtful prayer considers your own personal identity and where you are in relation to God and others. In reality, private prayer is rarely “private,” aside from the fact that we can pray solitarily in mind, heart, and space. Our faith lives should be as social as they are spiritual as we strive to link ourselves, others, and God in right relationship, with God at the center.

In times of joy, despair, or even poor disposition, we need not search for words to pray, as they have been gifted to us as liturgy. The feast to which we are invited today is the same feast celebrated by Christ and His apostles. The very origin of private prayer, both supplication and thanksgiving, is inspired by Christ’s sacrifice. In this way, our souls instinctively return again and again to the summit toward which and the fount from which all power flows—the liturgy.

<sup>1</sup>Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 1963, Paragraph 10

<sup>2</sup>Fr. Michael Gilligan of American Catholic Press “Liturgy and Devotions” [www.americancatholicpress.org](http://www.americancatholicpress.org)

<sup>3</sup>[www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship](http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship)

<sup>4</sup>St. John Paul II, Address to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, September 21, 2001



# darkness & light

*Reflections on St. Norbert Abbey from Dianne Wagner* By Katrina Marshall



Throughout her lifetime Dianne Wagner has always felt the Norbertine influence. In 1936 her parents worked at WTAQ, one of the Norbertine radio stations located in downtown Green Bay's Bellin building, assisting her uncle, Fr. James

Wagner, O. Praem., who was manager at the time. Dianne was born into St. Willebrord Parish and studied at St. Norbert College, where she later served as alumni director.

*"From my youth I always had a yearning for something I didn't even have a word for: spirituality. As I grew older I became active as much as I was allowed in the various parishes I attended. It still wasn't enough."*

Eventually, due to personal crises, Dianne admitted that she felt abandoned by God. *"I was in a very dark place and questioned all that I had believed in and accomplished."* After leaving the Catholic Church and being away from De Pere on and off for 30 years, Dianne decided to move back permanently.

*"I came home confused spiritually—a bit wounded and at times wondering if God even existed. I needed a refuge. St. Norbert Abbey became a safe place to ask questions without judgment or condemnation. By sharing these feelings with priests I had grown close to, I realized that all of this was a normal part of growing spiritually and that I wasn't the first to have these questions. I think it was the 'restlessness' that St. Augustine shared with his followers."*

Dianne explained that the liturgies at the abbey have connected her with the Church of her childhood, and yet also provide a place for her as an adult to continue to grow spiritually.

*"Music has always been an important part of my spiritual life. I was able to cantor at the abbey years ago. For me, it's the most fulfilling way to pray. Here I feel blessed to be able to join the Norbertines in their daily prayers. The Magnificat brings back my childhood devotion to Mary. She becomes real to me again. And at Sunday Eucharist the Abbey Singers of St. Norbert College perform not only Latin hymns of the past, but also newly composed hymns of today: 'ever ancient, ever new.'"*

Dianne's favorite liturgy at the abbey is the Easter Vigil.

*"Sitting quietly in the darkness, meditating on the crucifixion, when suddenly the darkness is lit up by a fiery torch, accompanied by the pealing of the abbey bells and the joyful singing of the choir is an incredible spiritual experience."*

For Dianne, the abbey is a place of healing and inclusiveness where all are welcome to share in the blessed life of the Church.

*"The abbey—the church, the liturgy, the Norbertine Center for Spirituality, and most of all the priests who have given me loving compassion and support—all became a haven for my heart and spiritual growth, which continues today."*

# Ritual and Gesture

## Why We Do What We Do

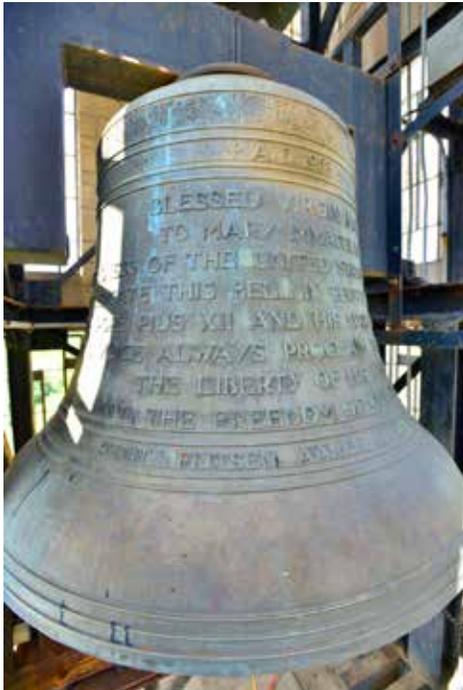
By Fr. Stephen Rossey, O. Praem.

*As I sat in choir at Our Lady of Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky waiting for the Trappist liturgy to begin, I was struck by the sense of reverence and decorum that pervaded the place. Monks entered the choir so quietly that no sound could be detected. One sensed immediately that God's presence was acknowledged by simple gestures and postures: recognition of God's presence in others, in objects, and in one's self.*

*Closer to home, the old Premonstratensian Ordinarius spelled all of this out for us in rubrical detail for many generations. We all do the same things at the same time, a requisite of good liturgy. To me that is one of the meanings of common prayer: common gestures, common postures, and common (one) voice, in the praise of God. But why do we do what we do? What is the meaning behind our centuries of common ritual and gesture?*

"Do this in memory of me." Fr. James Neilson, O. Praem., celebrates Mass at St. Norbert Abbey.

# within Liturgy



Blessed Virgin Mary bell | Hear the bells of St. Norbert Abbey online at [www.norbertines.org](http://www.norbertines.org)

## Call to Worship

*Church bells* are used to direct our attention: one bell or stroke pattern to announce death, another to call the faithful to prayer, another to announce the rank of the feast being celebrated. They are also used to announce the times of the Liturgy of the Hours in monasteries and abbeys, and the Angelus in parish churches.

## Sacred Spaces

The *spaces* that we have set aside in our buildings for the celebration of the liturgy have been made holy by ritual actions. We have sprinkled these spaces with holy water. We have anointed their walls and objects within them with sacred oils. We have recited words over them recalling God's actions on behalf of God's holy people. Through these words and gestures these spaces have become deserving of our utmost reverence and care. Above all, the spaces we have set aside for liturgy are sacred because we gather in these spaces to praise God—we who also have been anointed and blessed and have become the living stones of God's temple. Hence it is our buildings that carry our most cherished memories, both for us as individuals and for the entire community.



Abbot General Thomas Handgrätiger, O. Praem. (left), and Abbot Gary Neville, O. Praem., reverence the altar of the St. Norbert Abbey Church.



Frater Patrick LaPacz, O. Praem. (left), and Frater Jordan Neeck, O. Praem., dress the altar of the St. Norbert Abbey Church.

## Reverence Due the Altar

At the center of our worship spaces stands the altar as the source and summit of the Eucharistic liturgical action. The altar, by the very nature of its consecration and blessing, is a primary symbol of Christ's presence in our midst.

Candles placed on or near the altar signify the light of fire penetrating darkness, a symbol for the Trinity and in particular for the Person of Christ. He is "*the Light of the world,*" as St. John tells us, and "*in Him there is no darkness.*"

A *processional cross* is the basic Christian symbol used at the altar. After leading the community into their gathering place, it is prominently positioned for the rest of the ritual action as a reminder of Christ's sojourn to Calvary and the ultimate giving of Himself unto death.

## The Sacrifice of the Mass

The *Sign of the Cross* at the beginning of Mass is a sign of our belief; it is both a "mini-creed" that asserts our belief in the Triune God, and a prayer that invokes God.



Newly-ordained Deacon Michael Brennan, O. Praem., offers the chalice to his mother Dorothy during communion of the Mass of his diaconate ordination.



A processional cross of St. Norbert Abbey

On some occasions *Anointings* with sacred oils are celebrated during Mass or other Sacraments. *Sacred oils* signify the work of the Holy Spirit, and symbolize that oil serves to cure our spiritual ailments, to diffuse the light of grace into our souls, and to render us strong and active in the never-ending conflict with evil.

The ritual use of *holy water* during the sprinkling rite is ancient and rooted in the Old Testament. When the Israelites entered the Temple, they had to undergo purification rites on certain days; these ritual purifications by water prefigured Christian Baptism. The use of holy water recalls our Baptism and should bring to mind that we are born again of water and the Spirit.

On certain feast days the Church uses *incense*; the fragrant smoke symbolizes our prayers rising to heaven and purifying what it touches. Incense is used during the Mass to bless the altar, a primary symbol for Christ, and, during the Preparation of the Gifts, to bless the bread and wine, and the congregation—the holy people of God.

In the *Introductory Rites* of the Mass **we speak to God** in order to prepare ourselves to worthily celebrate this awesome mystery by confessing our unworthiness, asking pardon, and begging for mercy.

**We then praise God** with the angelic song of praise sung at the birth of Christ for all God has done for us: the *Gloria*.

In the *Readings*, **God speaks to us** from the Old and New Testaments, recalling salvation history from the dawn of creation to the anticipated Second Coming of Christ. Our attitude should be one of *attentive listening* to God's Word and a *practical understanding* of how that Word impacts our daily lives. The celebrant's *homily* should further unpack this biblical message.

The annual *imposition of ashes*, the Penitential Rite in ritual expression, reminds us that we are mortal, that "*we are dust and unto dust we shall return*," and that we are radically dependent on God to overcome this fate.

The *Creed* is a bold profession of our belief in our Triune God: Creator Father, Redeemer Son, and Sanctifying Spirit, who promise eternal life for our belief.

In the *Preparation of the Gifts we give to God*. It is our lives lived in common, with and for each other, that God desires to be placed on this table, this "holy mountain," under the sign of bread and wine. God accepts all we place on this table and makes it holy in the *Consecration* and **gives it back to us** as the Body and Blood of Christ in the reception of *Holy Communion*.

### Distinctively Different

There are several differences between what people experience at Mass within their home parishes and Mass offered at St. Norbert Abbey.

- St. Norbert Abbey is not a parish church, which means there are no baptisms, confirmations, first communions, weddings, or funerals (except for members of the Norbertine community).
- There is a variety of celebrant presiders and homilists on a daily basis.
- All Sunday offertory collections, matched by the Norbertine community, are gifted to local charitable causes.
- All Eucharistic celebrations are concelebrated; that is, offered jointly with two or more priests.
- Well-trained musicians lead song and chant in an exceptional aesthetic and prayerful atmosphere. The Abbey Singers of St. Norbert College sing on Sundays during the college's academic year.
- Enlightening, illuminating ceremonies are held on special Norbertine feast days, vestitions, professions, and ordinations.
- Coffee, pastries, and conversation are offered in the abbey cloister walk after Sunday Mass.
- There is the opportunity for full, active participation for all laity. All are welcome to join the Norbertine community for Mass: Weekdays, 4:30 p.m. | Saturday, 8:30 a.m. | Sunday, 10 a.m.

View St. Norbert Abbey's full liturgical schedule online at [www.norbertines.org](http://www.norbertines.org).





Imploring the intercession of the saints, Frater Michael Brennan, O. Praem., lies prostrate during his Solemn Profession.

## First Vespers & Solemn Vows

On August 27 at First Vespers of the Solemnity of St. Augustine, **FRATER JOHNATHAN TURBA, O. PRAEM.,** and **FRATER ANH TRAN, O. PRAEM.,** were vested in the white habit of the Norbertine Order. Abbot Gary Neville, O. Praem., presided over the vestition ceremony in the St. Norbert Abbey Church. Frater Turba and Frater Tran are participants in the first-year Norbertine novitiate at St. Norbert Abbey.

On August 28, the Solemnity of St. Augustine, **FRATER MICHAEL BRENNAN, O. PRAEM.,** professed Solemn Vows, creating a mutual lifelong commitment to the canonical life between himself and the entire professed community. Abbot Neville presided over the solemn rite. The following day, Frater Brennan was ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Dale Melczek, Bishop Emeritus of Gary, Indiana. Deacon Brennan was vested in the white Norbertine habit in August 2011 and professed Simple Vows in August 2013.



*"As I shared with our guests on the occasion of these celebrations, I have found my way home here at St. Norbert Abbey. I am most grateful to God, to my fellow Norbertines, family, friends, and all those I have met along this journey.*

*I owe much to those who have prepared me for these joyful moments of solemn profession and ordination. I look forward to my ongoing growth and formation as I serve the People of God as a Norbertine deacon at Old St. Pat's in Chicago and here in our local community. Thank you to those who have supported me, challenged me, and prayed for me. I ask for your continued guidance as we all strive 'to be of one mind and one heart on the way to God.'*" — **Deacon Michael Brennan, O. Praem. (left),** with **Bishop Dale Melczek**



*"Upon my vestition, walking into the abbey church clad in a white habit of my own was a joyous and humbling experience. When everyone applauded to welcome Anh and me into the community, I was overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and support. I feel incredibly blessed to be joining the Norbertines.*

*As I begin my novitiate at the abbey, I look forward to learning more about the Norbertine heritage and about the surrounding community while also growing in my faith."* — **Frater Johnathan Turba, O. Praem. (left),** vested by **Fr. James Baraniak, O. Praem.**



*"To me, the vestition was absolutely a blessing from God, especially having my parents from Vietnam here witnessing this initiation of my new beginning. God's merciful heart and compassionate love have guided my wandering heart to the new adventure which is full of hope and yet beyond my imagination.*

*Because of that, I thank you, Lord!"* — **Frater Anh Tran, O. Praem. (left),** vested by **Fr. Salvatore Cuccia, O. Praem.**

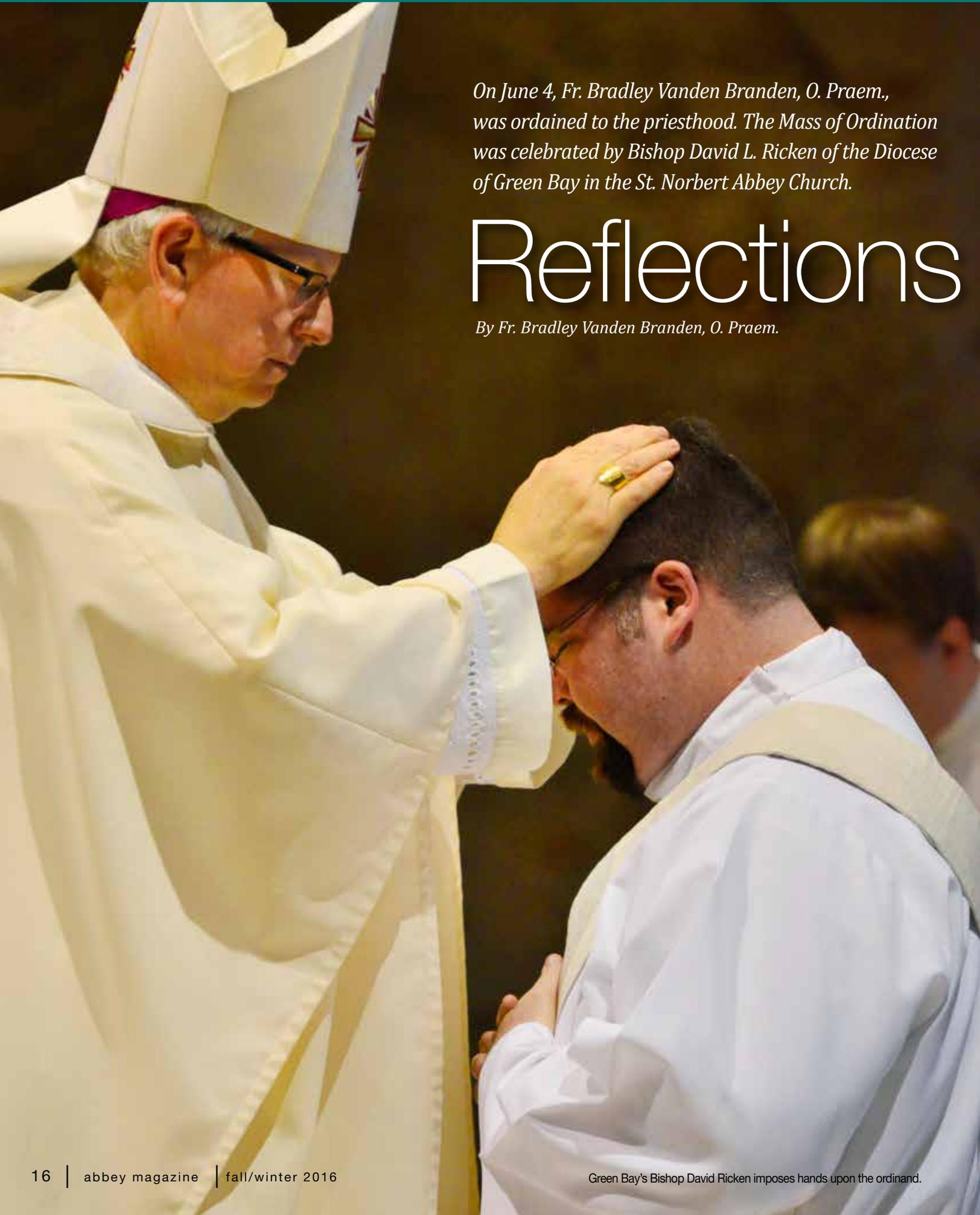


View the August 2016 celebrations at St. Norbert Abbey online at [www.norbertines.org](http://www.norbertines.org).

*On June 4, Fr. Bradley Vanden Branden, O. Praem., was ordained to the priesthood. The Mass of Ordination was celebrated by Bishop David L. Ricken of the Diocese of Green Bay in the St. Norbert Abbey Church.*

# Reflections

*By Fr. Bradley Vanden Branden, O. Praem.*



# on a Restless Heart



Norbertines are often quick to cite St. Augustine’s famous quote from his *Confessions*: “*You have formed us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.*” Indeed, this has become a favorite quote of mine as well, yet I was unaware of the restlessness of my own heart until my ordination drew near.

At first it was a strange sort of coincidence. The imagery and literature during my retreat in preparation for priesthood happened to center around the Sacred Heart of Jesus. My ordination Mass was held on the day traditionally memorializing the Immaculate Heart of Mary (the day after the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus). Bishop Ricken’s ordination homily also incorporated much of the homily Pope Francis gave to priests the day before on the Feast of the Sacred Heart. So by the time the homily was finished at my ordination, I was convinced that the Lord was trying to speak to me about something.

Then, as I knelt before the bishop, the only thing I was aware of—and honestly one of the only moments from my ordination I vividly remember—was my heartbeat. My own

heartbeat was the only thing I could hear as it pounded in my ears. My own heartbeat was the only thing I could feel as it almost punched through my chest. My own heartbeat seemed like it was jumping for joy at that moment of ordination.

What all this means, I’m still not sure. My own prayer and reflection on this significant moment for me is that my priesthood ought to be one of love. Just as the Sacred Heart of Jesus loves, so should I love all those whom I encounter. As Pope Francis said in his Sacred Heart homily, “*The Heart of the Good Shepherd tells us that His love is limitless; it is never exhausted and it never gives up.*” May it be so for me! May my heartbeat continue to fill my ears and pound out of my chest for the Church as long as I am a priest. Until I find rest in the Lord, may my heart keep me restless, pushing me forward, loving all people just as Christ would love them.

*On June 12, newly-ordained Fr. Vanden Branden returned to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Family in De Pere to celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving at his home parish. His beautiful homily was a tribute to God and the faithful at this vibrant Norbertine apostolate.*



View the June 2016 celebrations at St. Norbert Abbey and the Mass of Thanksgiving homily of Fr. Vanden Branden online at [www.norbertines.org](http://www.norbertines.org).

# THE NORBERTINE CENTER

## Prayer and Contemplation

### Candlelight Vigils

Another senseless tragedy. More sorrow and anguish in the world and in our hearts.

For months the staff of the Norbertine Center for Spirituality (NCS) had grappled with the challenging question, *“What in the world can we offer people in times of great tragedy and inconsolable grief?”*

On June 15, the St. Norbert Abbey Church was opened to those struggling with and wanting to pray for the victims (and their families and friends) of the Orlando shooting—one of the largest massacres in the history of the United States. **Abbot Gary Neville, O. Praem.**, welcomed the participants to an hour-long service filled with prayer, rich silence, candles, and music (performed by flutist Keith McGillivray and the Abbey Singers of St. Norbert College). Soft rain and gentle thunder heard throughout the service seemed to be nature’s way of entering into prayer. Whatever was taking place in the souls of the participants, the



Candlelighting at the June 15 prayer service | Photos by Sam Lucero

abbey provided a means for them to encounter God amid tragedy—together, in prayer.

*“When a tragedy occurs, the abbey should be one of the first places where people come,”* shared

**Fr. James Baraniak, O. Praem.**

*“This is what an abbey is called to do—provide a place of refuge in times of great pain.”*

St. Norbert Abbey and the NCS continue to find ways to open the doors of the abbey church after tragedies occur: the monthly Taizé service held on July 17 honored the slain Dallas police officers as well as all who have been touched by violence.

Note: Special prayer services will be posted on [www.norbertines.org](http://www.norbertines.org), sent to those subscribing to e-publicity through the NCS, and are often acknowledged in the media.

### Contemplative Practices

Given the noise and excessive activity within this world of ours, silence—real silence—can be difficult to find. We are usually plugged into something, be it our computers, smart phones, tablets, or TVs. However, it is often the silence and serenity for which people express their gratitude upon entering the NCS and St. Norbert Abbey, which host numerous prayer spaces and offer these contemplative practices.

# For SPIRITUALITY

*The Norbertine Center for Spirituality and St. Norbert Abbey offer various ways that people can reflect upon God in their lives—through intentional prayer services and contemplative practices.*



Hildegard of Bingen reading room and library, and second floor prayer space within the NCS

## Prayerful Environments

Prayer spaces abound within the NCS and St. Norbert Abbey. Men and women of all ages stop in, sometimes only for a few minutes, to spend time in prayer. Visit [www.norbertines.org](http://www.norbertines.org) for more information. Please stop in the NCS main office and you will be directed to a prayer space that meets your needs.

## Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer is a method of silent prayer which helps us open our minds and hearts to God beyond thoughts, words, and emotions. It is a way of consenting to God's presence and action within. While Centering Prayer does not replace other kinds of

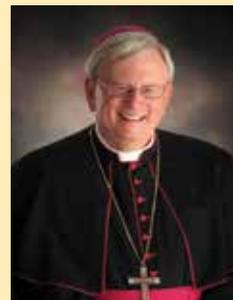
prayer, it can cast a new light and depth of meaning on them. Weekly Centering Prayer, facilitated by **Kathie Tilot**, is held every Tuesday morning in the Killeen Room at 7:10 a.m. All are welcome.

## Labyrinth

On the north side of the NCS is a lawn labyrinth, based on the design within the floor of Chartres Cathedral (AD 1220). The labyrinth is an ancient symbol of life's journey—a path of prayer. As a tool of integration between mind and body, it can be experienced as a personal pilgrimage, helping one find new insights and inner peace. Open during daylight hours, directions can be found inside the entryway of the NCS.

## Mark Your Calendar

- **October 13:**  
*The Conrad J. Kratz, O. Praem. Abbey Lecture Series: Integrating Science and Religion* presented by **Dr. David Poister**
- **October 21-23:**  
*Mystics, Rebels, and Prophets: Women Who Went Before Us and Walk with Us Today* facilitated by **Edwina Gateley**
- **November 5:**  
*Heaven-ly Conversation and the Jubilee Year of Mercy* with **Fr. John Tourangeau, O. Praem.**



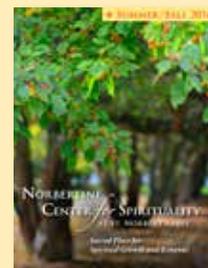
## A Day for Men, December 10

### Featuring:

- **Most Rev. David L. Ricken**  
Bishop, Diocese of Green Bay
- **John Schneider**  
General Manager, Seattle Seahawks
- **Very Rev. James Baraniak, O. Praem.**  
Prior, St. Norbert Abbey  
Chaplain, Green Bay Packers
- **Very Rev. Daniel Felton**  
Vicar General, Diocese of Green Bay

Join us as men of all ages gather together for this much-anticipated day of inspiration, education, challenge, and prayer.

Register early; this event is always a sellout!



For more information about these and other NCS events or to register online, go to [www.norbertines.org](http://www.norbertines.org).

# News, Honors, and Distinctions



Popular children's musician Randy Peterson provides entertainment at AbbeyFest.

## AbbeyFest Family Fun

Music and laughter filled the air on July 24, when **ST. NORBERT ABBEY AND THE NORBERTINE CENTER FOR SPIRITUALITY** held an inaugural family event. More than 220 people—ages 1 through 92—attended AbbeyFest 2016 and thoroughly enjoyed the abbey tours, music, displays, games, food, and especially the opportunity to interact with so many members of the Norbertine community.

In a post-event survey, the vast majority of respondents expressed their heartfelt gratitude for this opportunity. As one participant shared, ***“What a treat to learn about Norbertines and their rich history. The abbey itself is simply lovely and I’m so glad my children were able to enjoy the experience as well. Thank you—we’ll be back!”***

## Jubilee Celebration at St. Norbert Abbey

On June 6, the Solemnity of St. Norbert, Abbot Gary Neville, O. Praem., presided at Mass in the St. Norbert Abbey Church. This sacred celebration also honored the 50th priesthood ordination anniversary of **FR. SALVATORE CUCCIA, O. PRAEM.**



*“As I was reflecting on this anniversary ... the image of two roads came to mind: the road I was on, and God’s intersecting road of events and circumstances, which called me to turn ‘right.’ It’s God’s road so it has to be a ‘right’ turn.... Only God knows when the next ‘right’ turn will come.”*

Read Fr. Cuccia’s full profile and reflection online at [www.norbertines.org](http://www.norbertines.org).

## In Memoriam



**FR. JOSEPH RÉKASI, O. PRAEM.,** a member of Gödöllő Abbey, Budapest, Hungary, residing at St. Norbert Abbey, passed into God’s Eternal Kingdom on March 26, 2016.

Fr. Rékasi was born on August 28, 1921, in Jaszbereny, Hungary, where he graduated from Jozsef Nador Realgimnazium in 1940. He received degrees in philosophy, theology, and French, including a doctorate degree in French in 1960.

Fr. Rékasi was vested as a novice on August 15, 1940. He professed simple vows on September 9, 1941, professed solemn vows on September 9, 1945, and was ordained to the priesthood on March 25, 1946.

He began his teaching assignments at St. Norbert College, De Pere, in 1953 as an associate professor of French and Latin. He had numerous assignments at the University of Detroit as an associate professor of French. After retirement, he continued various ministries at Old St. Joseph Church and St. Joseph Priory.

Fr. Rékasi will be remembered for his love of the language and culture of France, and without a doubt the city of Paris. He loved to converse about his travels, his remarkable early life, and escape from Hungary due to political unrest. He enjoyed showing his collection of personal pictures, carefully organized and identified.

## Norbertine Volunteer Community



This August, the Norbertine Volunteer Community (NVC) welcomed two members to its 2016-2017 program. These young adults are dedicating 11

months to serving the greater Green Bay community while living together in community.

**KIMBERLY TADLOCK** (left) from Vancouver, Washington, graduated from Whitworth University (Spokane, Washington) in 2016 with a major in mathematics and a minor in philosophy. She is serving at St. Thomas More Catholic School as the campus ministry coordinator and at Ss. Peter and Paul as a faith formation volunteer. *“I have a passion for helping children get a quality education and firm foundation in the faith. I hope to gain a better knowledge of what my gifts and abilities are, and how they can be put to use in the service of others—the service of God.”*

**JACLYN GEYER** from Tacoma, Washington, is a 2015 graduate of Whitworth University. She is serving at St. Willebrord Parish as a pastoral ministry intern, where her duties include adult faith formation and office assistant responsibilities. *“I wanted to work in an environment where my skills would best be used to serve. As a history major, when I heard about the kind of work they needed it seemed like a great fit! I also hope to use this time to grow in my faith and discern where God is directing me in the future.”*

To learn more about the NVC, a full-time service opportunity and outreach program of the Norbertine community, contact Ellen Mommaerts, director, at (920) 403-2944 or [ellen.mommaerts@norbertines.org](mailto:ellen.mommaerts@norbertines.org).



**ST. NORBERT ABBEY**  
1016 N. BROADWAY, DE PERE, WI 54115

## 2016 FALL/WINTER CALENDAR FOR ST. NORBERT ABBEY

### OCTOBER



October 21- 23

- 11, 25 – **Understanding the Old Testament** (Dr. Thomas Bolin), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 13 – **The Conrad J. Kratz, O. Praem. Abbey Lecture: Integrating Science and Religion** (Dr. David Poister), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 15 – **Canon John O. Bruce Memorial Organ Concert** (Jonathan Ryan), Abbey Church, 2 p.m.
- 16 – **Taizé Prayer**, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
- 18 – **Two Men and a Camel: A Journey to Jerusalem and Back** (Mark Mogilka, Tony Pichler), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 21-23 – **Mystics, Rebels, and Prophets: Women Who Went Before Us and Walk with Us Today** (Edwina Gateley), Friday, 4:30 p.m.-Sunday, 11 a.m.
- 26 – **Between the Pages Book Discussion: Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption** (Tony Pichler), 10-11 a.m.
- 27 – **Pints with a Purpose: Uniforms that Unite** (Fr. James Baraniak), 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- 29 – **Deepening the Spiritual Life: The Journey Continues** (Pr. Lee Goodwin, Sr. Judy Miller), 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 30 – **Food, Fun, and Football: Mass, Tailgate, and Packer Game with the Norbertine Community**, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.



October 27

### NOVEMBER

- 1 – **All Saints Day**, Abbey Church, 4:30 p.m.
- 2 – **All Souls Day**, Abbey Church, 4:30 p.m.
- 2 – **Veterans Share their Faith Journey: Healing Symbols from Scripture** (George Kamps), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 3 – **Faithful Citizenship: Voting Your Conscience** (Br. Steve Herro), 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- 5 – **Heaven-ly Conversation and the Jubilee Year of Mercy** (Fr. John Tourangeau), 8:30 a.m.-Noon
- 7, 14 – **Exploring Shakespeare and Christian Themes** (Fr. David Komatz), 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- 9 – **Babette's Feast** (Dr. John Neary, Judy Turba), 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- 15 – **Children in Poverty: A Panel Discussion** (Robyn Davis, Nan Pahl, Andrea Pasqualucci), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 16 – **Coffee and Conversation with Fr. Brian Prunty, O. Praem.**, 10-11 a.m.
- 20 – **Taizé Prayer**, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
- 22 – **Ecumenical Thanksgiving Prayer Service**, Abbey Church, 7-9 p.m.
- 27 – **First Sunday of Advent Mass**, Abbey Church, 10 a.m.
- 30 – **Twilight Retreat: Advent** (Sr. Judy Miller), 5:15-8 p.m.



November 3



December 10

### DECEMBER

- 3 – **Advent Presentation** (Fr. James Neilson), 9:15-10:15 a.m.
- 4, 11, 18 – **Sundays in Advent Mass**, Abbey Church, 10 a.m.
- 8 – **Candlelight Labyrinth Walk** (Kathie Tilot), 6:15-8 p.m.
- 10 – **A Day for Men** (Bishop David Ricken, John Schneider, Fr. James Baraniak, Fr. Daniel Felton), 9:15 a.m.-5 p.m.
- 18 – **Taizé Prayer**, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
- 24 – **Christmas Eve Vigil Mass**, Abbey Church, 8 p.m.
- 25 – **Christmas Day Mass**, Abbey Church, 10 a.m.



January 15

### JANUARY 2017

- 1 – **New Year's Day Mass**, Abbey Church, 10 a.m.
- 8 – **Schola d'Arezzo Concert** (Gregorian chant of the Christmas season), Abbey Church, 2:30 p.m.
- 12 – **Children: God's Greatest Gift and Challenge—Practical Advice for Parenting** (Lisa Schubring), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 15 – **Taizé Prayer**, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
- 19 – **The Year of Matthew** (Dr. John Craghan), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 21 – **Morning of Spiritual Renewal for Women**, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 26 – **Living Your Strengths** (Tony Pichler, Judy Turba), 9 a.m.-Noon

For a complete list of programs and retreats, visit [www.norbertines.org](http://www.norbertines.org) or call (920) 337- 4315 to receive our latest program guide.



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