

Abbey

magazine

Ever Ancient,
Ever New PAGE 8

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From the Abbot

EVER ANCIENT, EVER NEW

The abbot's office has a large picture window that looks out on the abbey grounds facing what we would call our front yard. This portal provides a glorious myriad of scenes that change with the seasons, truly reflecting our "Ever Ancient, Ever New" charism. The melting snow of spring reveals lush green as trees quickly burst with leaves. Mother Nature creatively moves into summer and leads us into the vibrant colors of fall harvest time. A barren winter returns and the cycle repeats.

The change of seasons also reveals the planting of new crops on abbey grounds, a place teeming with wildlife. Fawns prance through the fields and share their world with God's creatures that walk and fly. We enjoy the wonder of new birth in the abbey's four cloister gardens, where mother turkeys, ducks, and geese descend into the yards to lay their eggs. We all wait with the expectant moms for the hatchlings and the swarms of little ones exploring their new safe and sacred home. This gift of renewed life never gets old! As Jeremiah reminds us: ***"With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please" (Jeremiah 27:5).***

Such cycles are revealed and played out in every facet of life. All begins anew, finds purpose, and generates the means to renew. Our spiritual Father Augustine knew that well.

***"I sought this world and chased its finer things,
Yet were these not in You, they would not have been.
My ceaseless longing hid the deeper truth,
In all my desiring, I was desiring You."
—Prayer of St. Augustine***

As Norbertines, we share an unwavering belief in the ancient and the energy it generates. "Ever Ancient, Ever New" is our statement of belief in God's unchanging truth, constantly renewed and re-presented in fresh and engaging ways. The Norbertines used to broadcast over the airwaves; now we engage with people over the Internet. The place we live and work, St. Norbert Abbey, is built in the shape of the ancient Cross, yet we are reinventing some of our building to serve our ministry in new ways. New people continue to join our 900-year-old order, proving once again, "St. Norbert is not just a man who lived 900 years ago; his is still a living, breathing presence . . . today." Without abandoning our roots in Jesus Christ, we grow and change to nurture and strengthen them.

This issue of *Abbey Magazine* is an energizing glimpse at our relentless effort to remain "Ever Ancient, Ever New."

Gary Neville, O.Praem.



ST. NORBERT ABBEY
DE PERE, WISCONSIN

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From an ancient necrology of the Norbertine saints to digital podcasts, the Norbertines of St. Norbert Abbey embrace modes of communication that engage people and glorify God.



Fawns prance through the fields of St. Norbert Abbey and share their world with God's creatures that walk and fly.

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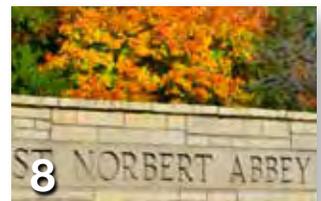
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*“Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
Wheat that in the dark earth many years has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.”¹*

Wheat that Springs Up Green

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

In our part of the world, Norbertines were often referred to as the “white fathers” because of our white religious habit. Why white? There are several explanations floating around, ranging from the very practical—and likely true—idea that undyed wool spoke of poverty, as opposed to more theological or spiritual explanations.

The one I like best is that our white robes bear witness to our faith in the Resurrection. Indeed, the model of the Paschal Mystery provides a useful lens for interpreting Christian life and Norbertine life, both past and present.

How many people realize our order almost died out several times in its history? The 16th-century Protestant Reformation saw the loss of hundreds of abbeys in those parts of Europe that embraced the reform. The principle that a country or region would follow the religion of its ruler meant the loss of many Norbertine houses.

About 48 houses existed in England at the time Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries. Even in Catholic countries like France, the practice of handing over the title of “abbot” and the income of religious houses to non-Norbertines compromised the spirit of religious life. The French Revolution involved the suppression of the abbeys, and the Napoleonic Empire closed remaining monasteries.

Then closer to our times, the communist regimes of Eastern Europe expelled Norbertines from their houses and in general suppressed religious practice. While communities continued, they did so underground. Unable to live the full Norbertine life, they kept the community alive in dispersion.

Despite all these “deaths,” the order has consistently sprung back to life, and as social and political conditions changed, the religious who had been dispersed regrouped. They lived through the classic Paschal Mystery of death—the apparently empty but actually quite rich time in-between, opening to the Resurrection.

This history, viewed in the context of our faith, can give us hope and energy. In our own community after a time of abundant vocations, we have gone through periods when very few entered and many did not stay. But we seem to be in a new cycle. After a period of drought, we currently have a strong, vibrant juniorate.

Death, emptiness, and new life is the pattern for Christian life—
as a Church, as communities, and as individuals.

¹ “Now the Green Blade Rises.” Text: John M. C. Crum. Oxford Book of Carols, 1928.





*“Ahora las hojas verdes se levantan de los granos enterrados,
Trigo que en la obscuridad de la tierra ha pasado muchos años;
El amor vive otra vez, amor que con la muerte ha estado:
El amor viene otra vez, como el trigo que florece verde.”¹*

Trigo que crece verde

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

En nuestra parte del mundo, a los Norbertinos se les conocía como “Los Padres Blancos” por su hábito religioso blanco. ¿Por qué blanco? Hay varias explicaciones, desde la más práctica—y quizá verdadera—idea de que la lana sin teñir significaba verdadera pobreza, hasta la explicación más teológica o espiritual. La que más me gusta es la que dice que nuestra vestimenta blanca da testimonio de nuestra fe en la Resurrección. En verdad, el modelo del Misterio Pascual provee un lente útil para interpretar la vida Cristiana y la vida Norbertina, tanto en el pasado como en el presente.

¿Cuánta gente sabrá que nuestra orden casi murió algunas veces en lo que va de su historia? En el siglo 16 la Reforma Protestante vio la pérdida de cientos de abadías en esas partes de Europa que abrazaron la reforma. La idea de que un país o región seguiría la religión de su gobierno significó la pérdida de muchas casas Norbertinas.

Más o menos 48 casas existían en Inglaterra en el tiempo cuando Enrique Octavo disolvió los monasterios. Hasta en países Católicos, como Francia, la práctica de pasarse el título de “abad” y las finanzas de casas religiosas a no-Norbertinos era parte del espíritu de la vida religiosa. La Revolución Francesa involucraba la supresión de las abadías y el Imperio Napoleónico cerró los monasterios que quedaban.

Entonces y más cercano a nuestro tiempo, los regímenes comunistas de Europa del Este expulsaron a Norbertinos de sus casas y en general suprimieron la práctica religiosa. Aunque seguían las comunidades, lo hacían escondiéndose. Sin poder vivir completamente la vida Norbertina, mantuvieron la comunidad en vida aun en la dispersión.

A pesar de todas estas “muertes,” la orden ha vuelto a la vida consistentemente, y conforme cambiaban las condiciones sociales y políticas, los religiosos que se habían dispersados se reagruparon. Ellos vivieron el clásico Misterio Pascual de muerte—el aparentemente vacío pero en verdad muy rico tiempo-entremedio, abriéndose a la Resurrección.

Esta historia vista en el contexto de nuestra fe puede darnos esperanza y energía. En nuestra propia comunidad después de un tiempo de abundantes vocaciones, hemos pasado por períodos en los que muy pocos entraban y muchos no se quedaban. Pero parece que estamos en un nuevo ciclo. Después de un período de sequía, ahora tenemos un fuerte y vibrante juniorado. Muerte, vaciedad, y nueva vida es el patrón para la vida Cristiana—como Iglesia, como comunidades, y como individuos.



Heart & Soul

Norbertines and St. Norbert College Share Charisms, Values

By Gina Sanders Larsen and Judy Turba

They exist on opposite sides of the Fox River in De Pere, Wisconsin, but the unwavering bond between the Norbertines of St. Norbert Abbey and St. Norbert College is strong and unambiguous. A new college president, a re-energized campus parish, and an innovative first-year student experience illustrate the institutions' steadfast connection, "to be of one mind and one heart on the way to God" (*The Rule of St. Augustine*).

Meet Brian Bruess, SNC College President and Alumnus

"Being an alum, I believe the stakes are higher for me as I serve in this role as president because St. Norbert College is not only a place I love but also a place that formed me." — **Brian Bruess**

With a warm and gracious greeting, **Fr. James Baraniak, O. Praem.**, and **Judy Turba** met with **Brian Bruess**, recently named president of St. Norbert College (SNC), after his first month in office. During their time together, this most impressive 1990 SNC graduate shared thoughts about his journey, his vision for the college, and its connection to the Norbertine community, as well as what it means to come home.

Brian Bruess, Ph.D., 50, eighth president of St. Norbert College, is only the second alumnus ever to serve in this role; **Fr. Dennis Burke, O. Praem.**, was the first, and the similarities are striking. "Fr. Burke also followed an exceptional leader, **Abbot (Bernard) Pennings**, the founder of St. Norbert College," said Bruess. "I, too, am following an outstanding and tremendously successful leader, **Tom (Thomas) Kunkel**. Needless to say, their extraordinary leadership is both intimidating and inspiring." In fact, the year Bruess was born,



(L-R) Frater Anh Tran, O. Praem. (front), Frater Jordan Neeck, O. Praem., President Brian Bruess, Abbot Gary Neville, O. Praem., Fr. James Herring, O. Praem. (standing), Fr. Tim Shillcox, O. Praem.



President Brian Bruess received bachelor of arts degrees in sociology and psychology from St. Norbert College with master's and doctoral degrees from Ohio University, Athens, Ohio. He most recently served at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota, as executive vice president and chief operating officer. During his 21-year tenure there, he also was involved with enrollment management, finance, student affairs, and information technology. Bruess and his wife, Carol, also a 1990 graduate of St. Norbert College and most recently professor of communication and journalism at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, have two children: Gracie, a high school senior, and Tony, a Stanford University senior.

Fr. Burke was retiring. Bruess remembers vividly from his years at the college a painting of Fr. Burke walking across the campus with then-presidential candidate John F. Kennedy. "The image has stayed with me all of these years."

Bruess' excitement is palpable and contagious. He realizes he is inheriting the helm of one of the top-ranked Catholic liberal arts colleges in the country. "Being an alum, I believe the stakes are higher for me because St. Norbert College is not only a place I love but also a place that formed me. Here I began to contemplate a career in higher education through the encouragement of faculty and administrators. I have had opportunities to serve elsewhere, but I honestly feel *called* here. It's my vocation."

Bruess shared his deep commitment to the college's mission: "St. Norbert College, a Catholic liberal arts college embracing the Norbertine ideal of *communio*, provides an educational

environment that fosters intellectual, spiritual, and personal development." The mission statement emphatically stresses the tripartite—Catholic, Norbertine, liberal arts—all of which are inseparable and equally important. "This is the only Norbertine college in the world, and society has never needed St. Norbert College graduates more than now. The charism here is rich and powerful, distinctive and transformational." Through regular meetings with the abbot and members of the abbot's council, he will envision with the Norbertine community how best to sustain this mission. "I feel significantly responsible to represent Norbertine values and ensure that these values are woven within all aspects of our education."

Given Bruess' experience in higher education, his highly regarded expertise, commitment to Norbertine values, and passion for his alma mater—the sky is the limit. He is ready to serve.

College of Chaplains Returns to Campus, St. Norbert College Parish

The College of Chaplains at St. Norbert College (SNC) was reestablished in late 2016 after several years of relying on one or two ordained Norbertines to lead the campus parish, St. Norbert College Parish. According to **Fr. Jay Fostner, O. Praem., Ph.D.**, vice president for mission and student affairs at SNC, the College of Chaplains affords many more ordained Norbertines the opportunity to participate in the liturgical life of campus while they simultaneously fulfill their regular full-time duties as teachers, students, professors, priest celebrants, administrators, chaplains, and parish priests. “Years ago, students saw a lot more white robes on campus than in recent times. In a sense, the reintroduction of the College of Chaplains is a revival of that tradition.”

To reinstitute the College of Chaplains, permanent **Deacon Kevin DeCleene** was named full-time pastoral leader of St. Norbert College Parish last fall. He reports to Fr. Fostner, priest moderator. The two men coordinate the participation of several ordained Norbertines in the lives of year-round and student parish members.

Fr. Michael Brennan, O. Praem., and **Fr. Andrew Ciferni, O. Praem.**, will be most active in the College of Chaplains, and are assisted by other Norbertine priests. Together with the five-member staff of the SNC Emmaus Center for Spiritual Life and Vocation, “we’ve already begun to experience renewed energy from Kevin’s enthusiastic leadership. Between the many Norbertines on campus and our talented 70-member staff in the entire division of mission and student affairs, there is such diversity of voices and personalities,” Fr. Fostner said.

St. Norbert College Parish exists to serve the spiritual and liturgical needs of the college’s 2700 students, faculty, and staff, the majority of whom are Catholic. In addition, the parish boasts approximately 415 households in year-round membership. “Our goal is to ensure the college feeds the parish and the parish feeds the college,” Fr. Fostner said. “The plan is working.”



(L-R) Fr. Michael Brennan, O. Praem., Fr. Andrew Ciferni, O. Praem., and Fr. Jay Fostner, O. Praem., are part of the College of Chaplains at St. Norbert College.

Gateway Seminar for First-Year Students Teaches Norbertine History and Values



Frater Anh Tran, O. Praem. (left), and Frater Johnathan Turba, O. Praem., visit with students who learn about the history and mission of St. Norbert of Xanten and St. Norbert College through the Gateway Seminar.

The inaugural Gateway Seminar for all incoming first-year St. Norbert College (SNC) students is in full swing. The seminar is a recently established graduation requirement; the new students gather once or twice a week during the fall semester in 22 small groups, each led by a three-person teaching team, typically comprised of two staff members and an upperclass student. The diverse teaching teams are charged with introducing the young adults to the history and mission of St. Norbert of Xanten and St. Norbert College. They also help new SNC students acclimate to college life and become familiar with one another and with faculty, staff, and Norbertines on campus who can assist them with their questions or concerns.

“St. Norbert College has had a first-year experience program for a long time, but it’s only this year when it became mandatory, which allows us to increase the number of sessions, deepen the content, and specifically educate our students on our history and mission,” said **Fr. Jay Fostner, O. Praem., Ph.D.**, vice president for mission and student affairs at SNC. “Research demonstrates that first-year experience courses increase retention, help students bond with the institution, and create positive and deeper relationships between students, faculty, and staff.”

Fr. Michael Brennan, O. Praem., Frater Johnathan Turba, O. Praem., Frater Anh Tran, O. Praem., and Norbertine Associate **Ellen Mommaerts**, director of the Norbertine Volunteer Community, are each members of Gateway teaching teams. As young men in formation for the priesthood, Frater

Turba and Frater Tran are often on campus. Fr. Brennan, SNC vocation coordinator, is also active in the College of Chaplains at SNC (see page 6).

“It’s become my new normal to have people approach me and ask questions about the priesthood,” Frater Turba said, especially considering that he is always wearing his white Norbertine habit. “If that’s the one thing that comes of our participation in Gateway—students engaging us in conversation—I think it’s wonderful. We are proof that St. Norbert is not just a man who lived 900 years ago, but through his ‘sons’ is still a living, breathing presence on our campus today.”

Frater Tran first came to the United States from Vietnam as a high school foreign exchange student. His American grandfather is an SNC graduate, and that connection led Frater Tran to attend and graduate from SNC with a business degree before joining the order. “It really does take a village to live and grow,” he said. “I rely on many others to help guide me, and now I help new students make connections that will help them discover new people and ideas.”

The 2017-2018 SNC first-year class is comprised of 542 students from 13 states and eight countries. “We have abbeys around the world, and Norbertines are an international order. Here we strive to create a campus community that is diverse and welcoming,” said Fr. Fostner. “The Gateway Seminar helps us nurture a community where learning happens within the context of our rich Catholic, Norbertine, and liberal arts traditions.”

Inside 1016

By Katrina Marshall, Gina Sanders Larsen, and Judy Turba

ST. NORBERT ABBEY

Ever Ancient, Ever New

From the outside looking in, St. Norbert Abbey seems timeless: the stone exterior, slate roof, 160 acres of natural and landscaped beauty, and the shining cross atop the iconic bell tower — *ever ancient*.

Yet within the walls of the abbey considerable activity is taking place: a massive renovation to meet the growing number entering the doors of the abbey and Norbertine Center for Spirituality; an unused space transformed into a state-of-the-art communication center; and a recently launched podcast — *ever new*.

Take a look inside 1016.



Like Norbertines who moved in during the abbey construction of the 1950s (top), Abbot Gary Neville, O. Praem. (right), and Fr. James Baraniak, O. Praem., survey the current renovation site.



Radical Hospitality, Growing Numbers Drive Significant Renovation

In 1959 the abbey was built as a home for professed members of the Norbertine Order and as a seminary for educating new Norbertines. The place was built for male religious; the laity were restricted to the abbey church and refectory (dining room) on special occasions. The average age of death at that time was 59, and as **Abbot Sylvester Killeen, O. Praem.**, once remarked, “There’s no need for elevators for men that age.”

With changes in the Church brought about by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and a decline in religious vocations, the rooms in the juniorate wing (northeast wing of the abbey complex) were no longer needed. In 1979, from these rooms the Norbertine Center for Spirituality (NCS)—originally known as the Ministry and Life Center—was created, thus opening the building to the laity for retreats and religious conferences. But little thought was given to what changes would be necessary as these programs grew.

Today the NCS hosts hundreds of events per year, including large multi-day retreats and popular programming that regularly fills the gathering spaces. Further, as the building is

at capacity with the number of Norbertine residents, and given the frequency of Norbertine vestitions, professions, and ordinations, it became apparent that improvements to the abbey's physical space were needed. In keeping with the Norbertine charism of radical hospitality, easier accessibility to the abbey for people of all abilities, an elevator to the second floor for retreatants, more restrooms for women, and a large gathering space for special functions were high on the list.

After careful planning and the offer of generous support from an anonymous donor, the Norbertines broke ground on a massive renovation project in summer 2017. Visitors will see the northeast corner of the abbey has been demolished, beginning the year-long process of converting it into a new entrance for the NCS and north side of the abbey, along with a reception hall, gallery, and easy elevator accessibility. The former sun deck will be converted into a conference room with offices, restrooms, and a small kitchen. The former swimming pool area will be converted into a large conference room.

These changes to the abbey will assure better spaces for the NCS, greater security for Norbertines and staff, more privacy as required for a religious house, and better stewardship of abbey complex usage ... and all of this without changing the basic footprint of the building. As the Norbertine mission remains ancient and rooted in faith and tradition, their space is renewed.



Architectural renderings of the remodeled reception area (left) and new meeting room.



The Norbertines of St. Norbert Abbey owned several influential Northeast Wisconsin television and radio stations until 1974.

From Broadcast to Podcast

It all started in 1925 when the St. Norbert College physics club, supported by **Fr. Ignatius Van Dyke, O. Praem.**, and then **Frater James Wagner, O. Praem.**, developed an experimental radio broadcasting station (WHBY) that became an influential U.S. 100-watt station. This small endeavor grew into commercial broadcast properties of the Norbertine community and eventually included WTAQ, WHBY-AM (Appleton), WBAY-AM and -FM, and WBAY-TV—all of which still exist today.

Throughout the years, WBAY-TV held the number-one audience position among the three area television stations. St. Norbert Abbey employed more than 125 people to manage the thriving Green Bay stations alone.

However, by 1974, changes within the broadcast industry were looming. According to **Abbot Emeritus Jerome Tremel, O. Praem.**, “Competition was heating up and Norbertine values were being compromised by the ever-increasing permissiveness in programming.” Given these concerns, Abbot Tremel, chairman of the board of the Norbertine broadcasting conglomerate, with the consent of his council, made the difficult decision to sell the Norbertine Order’s commercial broadcast properties.

Consistent with the mission of St. Norbert Abbey, the monies from that sale were used to endow St. Norbert College, Prémontre High School and Abbot Pennings High School

Frater Jordan Neeck, O. Praem. (left), and Frater Johnathan Turba, O. Praem., collaborate on the production of *Canons on the Run*, a podcast produced at St. Norbert Abbey.

(currently Notre Dame de la Baie Academy), and future retirement and seminarian needs within the order.

Fast-forward to 2017: three creative and energetic seminarians began discussing the possibility of developing St. Norbert Abbey podcasts: digital audio recordings available on the internet that can be downloaded and listened to on a computer or mobile device. **Frater Jordan Neeck, O. Praem.**, **Frater Johnathan Turba, O. Praem.**, and **Frater Anh Tran, O. Praem.**, spent months researching and strategizing along with **Katrina Marshall**, abbey communications coordinator, and **Judy Turba**, abbey external relations and media advancement director.

“I listen to podcasts often, especially when exercising, traveling, or just doing simple chores, like laundry,” explained Frater Turba. “I started to wonder if this was something we could do—develop our own podcast as Norbertines. Sometime later, Jordan told me about a podcast assignment he was finishing at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. The timing was beautiful. It felt like God clearly said, ‘Yes! This is something you can and should do!’”

In October 2017, the St. Norbert Abbey podcast *Canons on the Run* was launched. Its mission: to proclaim the Gospel, to give witness to fraternal life as Norbertines, and to educate others in the Catholic faith through modern communication.

Our Podcast Mission

To proclaim the Gospel, to give witness to our fraternal life as Norbertines, and to educate others in the Catholic faith through modern communication.



WBAY TV-2 was founded, owned, and operated by the Norbertines of St. Norbert Abbey through the mid-1970s.

The background image on this page is an early WBAY TV-2 screen test pattern, used for aligning black and white analog TV receivers prior to 1970.



Inspiration for the podcast title, *Canons on the Run*, was conceived from the idea that not only are Frater Neeck and Frater Turba Canons Regular* but also runners (marathon runners for that matter), journeying together, as are we all, running the race that God has set before us.

Frater Neeck and Frater Turba serve as the primary hosts of the podcast, delightfully and unabashedly sharing their Catholic faith, relevant topics, a bit of abbey humor, and of course, some of their conversations that occur while running together.

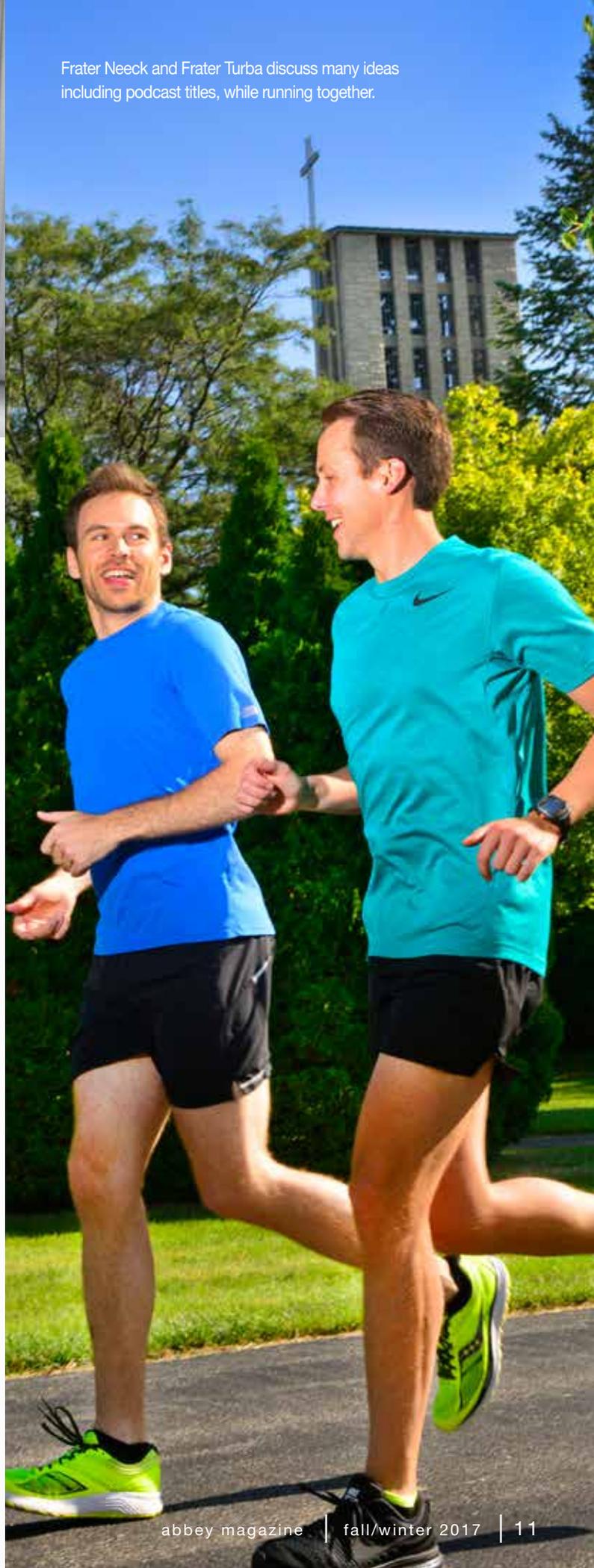
“Jordan and I happen to do a lot of learning, reflecting, and growing while on our runs. We hope to capture parts of that journey and share our fraternal life with others as we all strive ‘to be of one mind and one heart on the way to God.’”

**Canons Regular are members of a religious order who take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; live in community under a rule (usually The Rule of St. Augustine); and share their property in common. The purpose of the life of a canon is to engage in the public ministry of the liturgy and the sacraments.*



To subscribe or learn more about *Canons on the Run*, visit www.norbertines.org/podcast, where the first few episodes are available.

Frater Neeck and Frater Turba discuss many ideas including podcast titles, while running together.





A quill pen in the hands of a scribe calls to mind the long Norbertine tradition of writing, preaching, and teaching in service to God.

Katrina Marshall (left) and Judy Turba work together in the newly established *Scriptorium* at St. Norbert Abbey—the communications hub for all abbey publications and social media.

The *Scriptorium* of St. Norbert Abbey

The new communications center of St. Norbert Abbey officially has been named the *Scriptorium*, a Latin term meaning “a place for writing.” Most European monasteries devoted a particular room to writing, copying, and illuminating manuscripts. But instead of monks hunched over desks with flickering candles and ink-spattering quill pens, within the *Scriptorium* of St. Norbert Abbey there is a flurry of primarily digital activity—podcast development, website updates, social media management, video editing, and magazine production.

The space in the lower level of the abbey originally housed a Norbertine print shop (St. Norbert Abbey Press) and most recently served as the headquarters of the (since-discontinued) Norbertine mail campaign. Newly renovated from floor to ceiling, the *Scriptorium* now contains various offices, a conference room, meeting spaces, a soundproof recording studio, and editing stations. All abbey publications are coordinated here, including innovative forms of vocation communication. In response to expanding vocation inquiries, there is an Office for Norbertine Vocations not only on the St. Norbert College campus, but also now within the *Scriptorium* at the abbey.

The offices of **Judy Turba** and **Katrina Marshall** are located within the *Scriptorium*. Turba, executive editor of *Abbey Magazine*, is involved with public relations and communications, including social media, website development, and video production oversight, and assists with strategic abbey initiatives and evangelization. Given her professional counseling background, Turba also is involved with vocation ministry, conducting behavioral assessments for incoming seminarians and coordinating orientation sessions for parents and families of Norbertines. Turba has been involved with Norbertine institutions for more than 34 years, most recently serving as director and co-director of the Norbertine Center for Spirituality, as well as counselor, educator, and administrator at Abbot Pennings High School, Notre Dame de la Baie Academy, and St. Norbert College.

The role of Marshall, assistant editor of *Abbey Magazine*, has been expanded to include overseeing all aspects of the website, designing all promotional materials, coordinating advertising and marketing initiatives, press releases, and writing for various publications. Marshall, a graduate of St. Norbert College, has been with St. Norbert Abbey for seven years.



St. Norbert Abbey Social Media Scene



Almost every day something new is updated on www.norbertines.org—from relevant blog posts written by Norbertines to vibrant images and compelling upcoming events at the Norbertine Center for Spirituality. Be sure to add “check abbey website” to your weekly to-do list as you seek to be inspired or simply informed.



Young Norbertines like **Frater Jordan Neeck, O. Praem.**, theologian in priestly formation at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, a primary administrator of **St. Norbert Abbey's Facebook** page, say their generation often chooses to read information electronically. Follow us!



On any given day, **Fr. Bradley Vanden Branden, O. Praem.**, chaplain at Green Bay's Notre Dame de la Baie Academy, connects with more and more people through **Instagram** (StNorbertAbbey), sharing the abbey's unique culture and environment through intriguing images and words.



Having frequently used **Twitter** in his professional life before entering the Norbertine Order, **Frater Johnathan Turba, O. Praem.**, second-year novice and ministerial intern at St. Norbert College and St. Willebrord Parish, is a natural fit as manager of the @StNorbertAbbey account. Follow us for responsive quips and Tweets.



Search for and subscribe to St. Norbert Abbey on **YouTube** and visit us on **Vimeo** (Norbertines), where you will find exclusive clips of abbey celebrations, sounds of the organ, Norbertine interviews, spiritual reflection videos, and more.





Fr. Matthew Dougherty, O. Praem. (left), leads a book discussion.

Young Adult Catholic Book Study



To view the list of books visit www.norbertines.org.

By Fr. Matthew Dougherty, O. Praem.

In his talk at the 2010 Religious Education Congress in Los Angeles, Fr. Robert Barron (now Bishop Barron) shared a story about a visit he made to his brother's house. One day, after his niece came home from school—one of the elite Catholic high schools in Chicago—Fr. Barron couldn't help but notice her pile of textbooks on the kitchen table: Shakespeare's *Hamlet* for her English class, Virgil's *Aeneid* for her Latin class, and a tome of complex equations for her advanced physics class. He rummaged through the books in amazement, proud of his niece's sophistication and intelligence. After moving a few books aside, however, his heart quickly sank. Underneath some of the greatest works of Western civilization was a paperback book full of large, simple print and colorful cartoon pictures—she was using a comic book for her religion class.

Bishop Barron's story about his niece's textbooks is familiar to many young adults, including me. Many of us grew up with these religious "comic books" in our Christian formation courses, leaving us unaware of the richness, depth, and beauty of the Christian tradition. Until

recently, I had never heard of great Christian novelists or storytellers like Flannery O'Connor or Leo Tolstoy. I had not read the Christology of St. Athanasius of Alexandria or the mystical theology of St. Bonaventure. I did not know that theology had been brought to critically acclaimed films, like Terrence Malick's *The Tree of Life*. In other words, I was unaware that Catholicism had a vibrant, intelligent, and colorful culture that not only passed on the faith in nuanced and sophisticated ways, but also was compelling and enjoyable!

After our exciting discovery of the vibrancy of Catholic culture, and recognizing the importance of sharing it with other young adults, Adam Horn (director of religious education at St. Bernard Parish, Green Bay) and I decided to start a book club for young adults ages 21-39 at St. Norbert Abbey. During the summer of 2016, we kicked off the group with a Facebook page simply called: "Young Adult Catholic Book Study: Green Bay, WI."

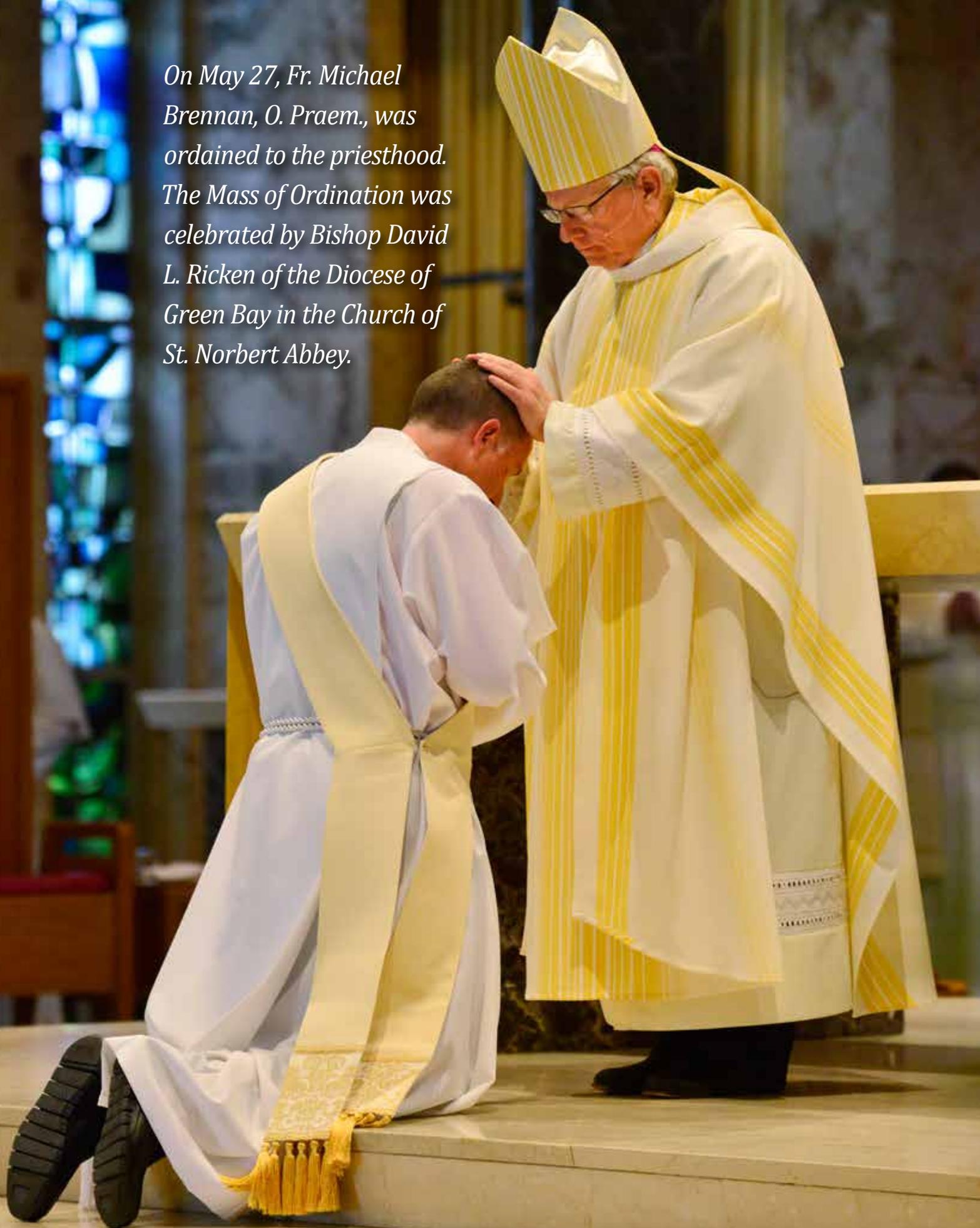
In September of 2016, we read our first work, *Leaf by Niggle* by J.R.R. Tolkien, with about eight members. After our

first event, the book club started to grow. As of August 2017, our Facebook group has 70 members with as many as 18 participants at each discussion.

The fruits of our little book study are many: we have built community; we have read, watched, and discussed several great books and films; we've learned much and become "more cultured" along the way. Most importantly, however, we've become better at articulating and appreciating our faith. This was the impetus behind Fr. Barron's story of his niece's textbooks: to encourage young people to read the great books of the Christian tradition so that they might better understand, preach, teach, defend, celebrate, and thus communicate our faith. We believe that this book club is helping young adults in Green Bay accomplish these goals.

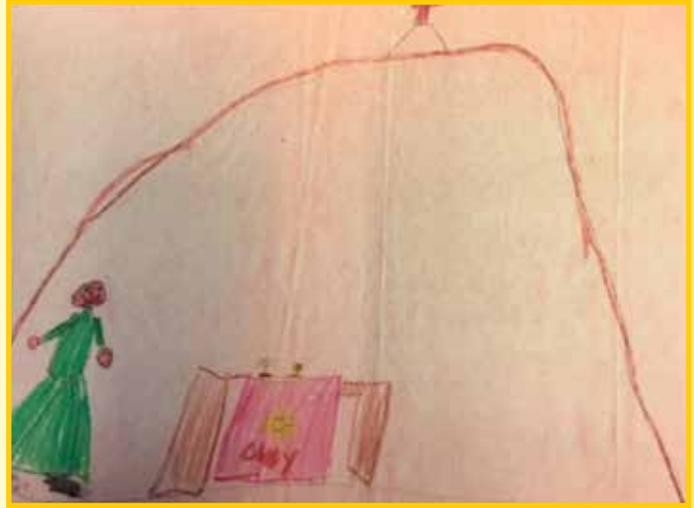
If you are a young adult interested in learning to better communicate your faith, simply search "Young Adult Catholic Book Study: Green Bay, WI" on Facebook and join our group. We would love to read, discuss, and journey with you! 

On May 27, Fr. Michael Brennan, 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 Church of St. Norbert Abbey.





“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” —Frederick Buechner
(A favorite quote of Fr. Brennan)



“When Mrs. Pearson asked my third grade class at Queen of All Saints to draw a picture of what we wanted to be when we grew up, this is the picture I drew. My mom kept it all these years; 31 years later, I finally grew up.”

Surprised By Joy

By Fr. Michael Brennan, O. Praem.

Words do not adequately express how deeply I have encountered God throughout the last several months.

On May 27, the 50th anniversary of my Uncle Ted’s ordination to the priesthood, I was ordained “a priest forever” (Hebrews 7:3) by Bishop David Ricken at St. Norbert Abbey. Throughout my ordination weekend and the ensuing days, I have been continually surprised by joy. In describing joy, C.S. Lewis once wrote, “It is difficult to find words strong enough for the sensation which came over me ...” I echo this sentiment; but I know for certain that I am home: I am home at St. Norbert Abbey, I am home in the overwhelming humility and joy of being continually invited into the brokenness and blessedness of the People of God.

Is it really possible for a 40-year-old man who has dreamt of being a priest since childhood to be surprised by joy?

(See drawing above.) I can tell you from experience—yes, I have known forever that I wanted to be a priest. And yes, I have repeatedly been surprised by joy. My ordination weekend (Mass of Ordination, “First Mass” of Thanksgiving, and related celebrations) and the weeks following continue to overwhelm my heart and soul with joy. Words do not adequately express how deeply I have encountered God throughout the last several months.

Saturday morning, ordination day, I was in the abbey dining room and bumped into one of our elder priests, who suffers from dementia. I shared, “Father, they’re ordaining me today.” Startled and a bit confused, he replied, “What?” I repeated, “I will be ordained a priest today.” This time my words registered, and his face lit up as he said, “They are?” Smiling, he gave me a tender and loving hug and added, “Congratulations!” With tears in my eyes and a lump in my throat I responded,

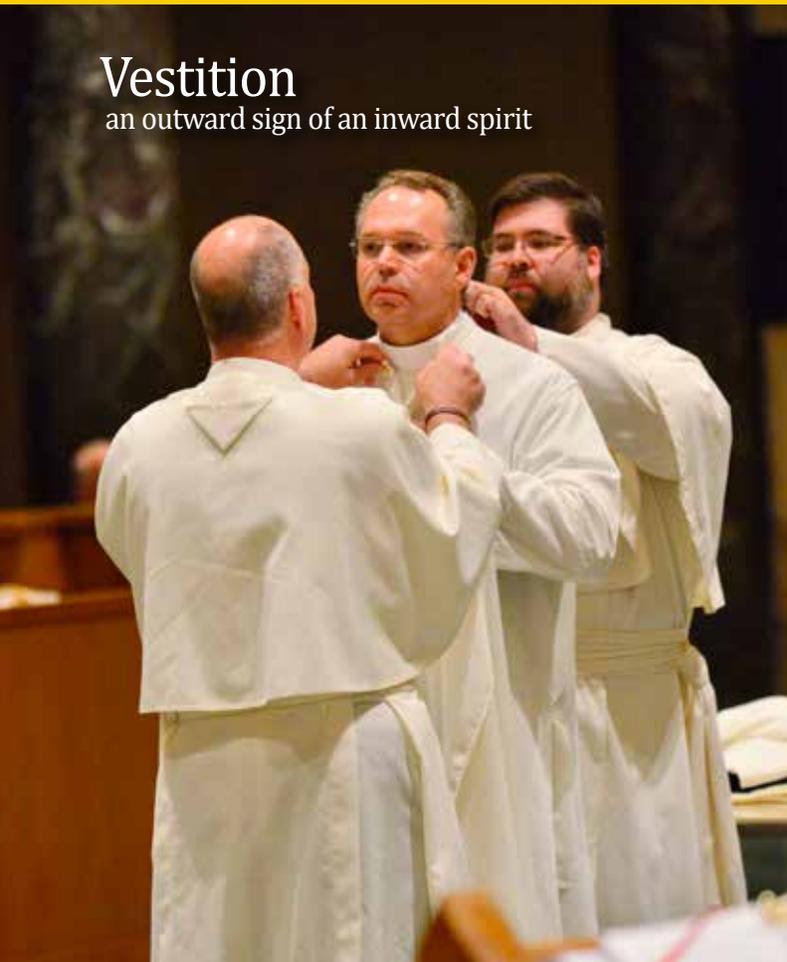
“Thank you, Father!” In the abbey dining room, I was surprised by joy.

Recently, I joined Deacon Kevin DeCleene, pastoral leader of St. Norbert College Parish, and two friends in the home of a fellow parishioner who was preparing to have back surgery. As we gathered around her kitchen table for the Anointing of the Sick, I was overcome with the goodness and grace of this sacred moment. Around our neighbor’s kitchen table, I was surprised by joy.

These are but two specific examples of how I have been surprised by joy throughout the last several months. In addition, I have been surprised by the joy of making eye contact with family and friends throughout my weekend of ordination and First Mass, of consecrating the Eucharist, and of hearing confessions. My prayer is that God will continue to surprise me with joy as I seek to serve God and neighbor as “a priest forever.”

Vestition

an outward sign of an inward spirit



Fr. Peter Ambting, O. Praem. (center), vested by Fr. James Baraniak, O. Praem. (left), and Fr. Bradley Vanden Branden, O. Praem.

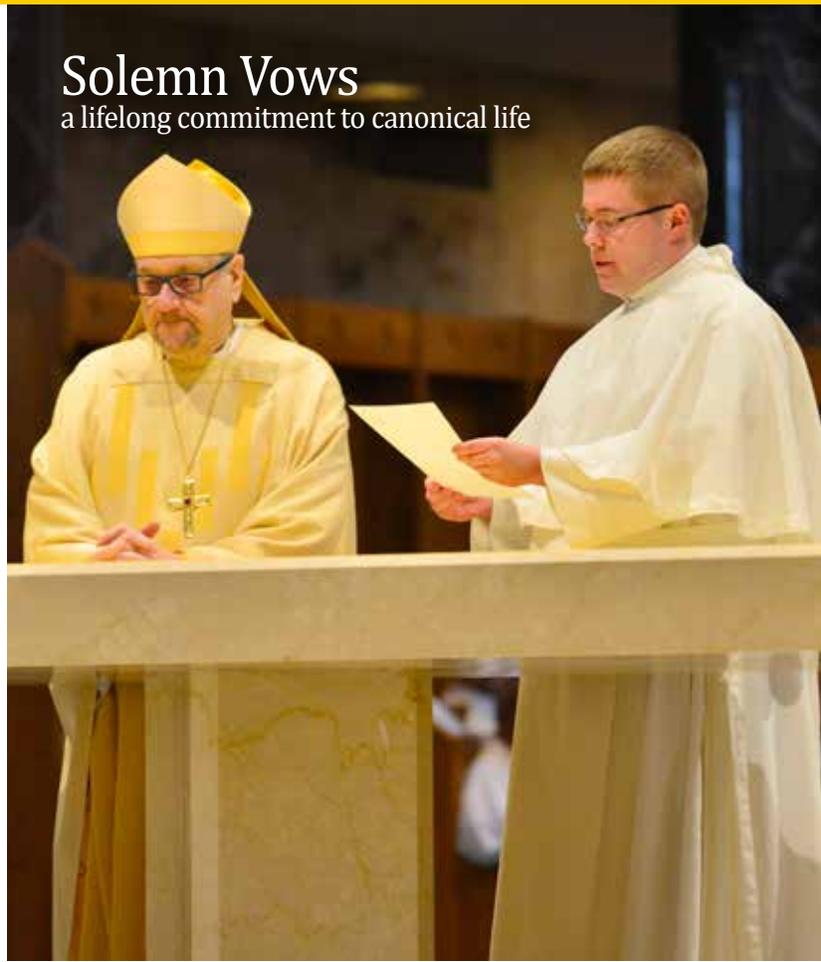
On August 27, at the First Vespers of the Solemnity of St. Augustine, **FR. PETER AMBTING, O. PRAEM.**, was vested in the white habit of the Norbertine Order. Abbot Gary Neville, O. Praem., presided over the vestition ceremony in the church of St. Norbert Abbey. Fr. Ambting is now participating in the first-year Norbertine novitiate at St. Norbert Abbey.

“After saying farewell to my parish in the Netherlands on July 2, emptying my house, and organizing the move to the U.S. in the weeks afterwards, finally the moment of vestition was here. It was the result of two and a half years of discernment since I first visited St. Norbert Abbey. That was a pretty long time. Because of the distance I was only able to make it to De Pere during my yearly summer vacation. I also wanted to finish the merger of the two parishes where I was the pastor.

I have been a priest for more than nine years, and always felt the desire for community life. The vestition with the white habit was for me an external sign of an internal movement. It felt good to take this first step, but I also realize the call to community life will be there every day as a gift and a task. After 10 years of working in a parish I look forward to take time for contemplation and reflection during the novitiate.”
—Fr. Peter Ambting, O. Praem.

Solemn Vows

a lifelong commitment to canonical life



Abbot Gary Neville, O. Praem. (left), and Frater Patrick LaPacz, O. Praem.

On August 28, the Solemnity of St. Augustine, **FRATER PATRICK LAPACZ, O. PRAEM.**, professed Solemn Vows, forming a mutual lifelong commitment to the canonical life between himself and the entire professed community. Abbot Gary Neville, O. Praem., presided over the solemn rite. On the next day, Frater LaPacz was ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Robert Morneau, Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Green Bay. Deacon LaPacz was vested in the white Norbertine habit in August 2012 and professed Simple Vows in August 2014.

“My solemn profession and diaconate ordination were special days for me. My journey to this point has been long, but it was worth the wait. I’m so glad I was able to celebrate these days with friends and family, and I can’t wait to see what God has in store for me this year as a Norbertine deacon.” —Deacon Patrick LaPacz, O. Praem.



View the August 2017 celebrations at St. Norbert Abbey online at www.norbertines.org.

NORBERTINE VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY

Sponsored by the Norbertine Community of St. Norbert Abbey

Contact Ellen Mommaerts, Director



920.403.2944

NVC@norbertines.org

www.norbertines.org



"The NVC helped me discover myself. The people I met and new experiences taught me to listen for God's call when the

next step is unclear. Professionally I found my passion and was offered full-time employment with my service site. The relationships and lessons learned from building and growing in community cannot compare to any other experience. It is this experience that has shaped who I am today."

—Koren (Bandoch) Petersen
NVC 2011-2012

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS



Community



Action



Stability of Place



Contemplation

Norbertine Associates



In August, **NANCY JAKUPS** was elected president of the Norbertine Associates of St. Norbert Abbey. Jakups is thankful for the opportunity to serve, looking forward to raising awareness about who the Norbertine Associates are and what they do, and increasing the community outreach and service they provide on behalf of the abbey and the Norbertines—all while providing servant leadership to a faithful and fun-filled group of associates.

In July, Norbertine Associates from Norbertine abbeys across the country gathered together for their fourth English-speaking conference at St. Norbert College and St. Norbert Abbey in De Pere, Wisconsin. Highlights of the event included presentations, discussions, and liturgies, as well as building friendships with fellow associates. Read their reflections online at www.norbertines.org.



Get to know Jakups and the Norbertine Associates at www.norbertines.org.

THE NORBERTINE CENTER *for* SPIRITUALITY

Exciting times, reorganization, at the Norbertine Center for Spirituality (NCS)

MEET THE NCS STAFF



Tony Pichler, Director

"I first served on the NCS Advisory Board. After a meeting one day, Judy Turba and I discussed the possibility of a co-directorship for the center. I felt if this was God's plan for me, it would all fall into place. The process was as smooth as glass, and two years later,

I could not be happier. I absolutely love the variety of what we offer at the center. From book discussions, to Bible studies, to more involved retreats—I love it all."

More About Tony:

He has co-authored eight books: a service manual for youth ministry leaders, three Advent journals for teens, three Lenten journals for teens, and a series of binders on discipline in a religious education curriculum. Another book, a confirmation journal for teens, is currently at the publisher. He also loves to watch and play sports, from golfing and kayaking to biking and tennis.



Kathie Tilot, Spiritual Direction and Public Relations Coordinator

"The first time I visited the NCS, I was overcome by the peacefulness and the rhythm of life here; by the classes that stretched me and helped me grow; and by the natural setting—right in the heart

of town. I graduated from St. Norbert College and the Norbertine community played an important role in my life. As my ministry evolved to include retreats and spiritual direction, the NCS seemed to be a perfect fit."

More About Kathie:

She loves watching people be empowered, whether it is sharing their sacred stories, learning a new spiritual practice, or finding rest under the shade of the trees. "Every day, as I drive up the long driveway, I thank God for the opportunity to serve here."



Ann Herlache, Program Coordinator

"My biggest joy in being a part of the NCS is all the good that we aim to bring into people's lives. The center truly strives to be an oasis for everyone who enters its doors."

More About Ann:

Ann worked in a manufacturing plant for seven years before she began her work at the NCS. She loves to garden and see the results of her planning and cultivating, ultimately using her herbs and vegetables when she cooks for her family.



Sr. Lisa Alexander, SSJ-TOSF, Administrative Assistant

"I came to several programs at the NCS and then was honored to be asked to join the team. I really enjoy administrative work, so this ministry is a really good fit for me. Positive attitudes and a genuine sense of teamwork make being here a pleasure. This sacred place has a special feeling all its own—there is a peace that is hard to put into words."

More About Sr. Lisa:

Sr. Lisa was a member of the first group of trained advocates for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) in Brown County. CASA is a national organization that trains volunteers to work with children who are in need of protective services. She is also currently enrolled in coursework to complete her business management degree at Northcentral Technical College.



Lori McKeough, Weekend Assistant

"I came to the center for spiritual growth and development, and the opportunity to work here was divine intervention. I love to witness the gratitude as guests reluctantly leave this beautiful place after a weekend retreat."

More About Lori:

Lori was a Stephen Minister for two years and a leader of the program for four years. Stephen Ministry is a one-on-one Christian caregiving program that helps people journey through life crises, such as grieving or a cancer diagnosis.



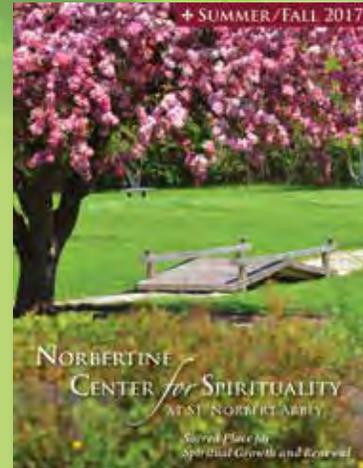
LABYRINTH WALK

The annual summer Labyrinth walk, held June 20, was attended by more than 50 people. Kathie Tilot offered information about this ancient meditative prayer form prior to the walk. Participants were accompanied by lovely cello music performed by **Frater Johnathan Turba, O. Praem.**



ABBEYFEST

On August 6, the second annual AbbeyFest was held beginning with Mass celebrated by newly ordained **Fr. Michael Brennan, O. Praem.**, followed by abbey tours, children's games, and a delicious barbeque. The abbey grounds were alive with music, laughter, and appreciative attendees.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

October 24

**Reformation in the Church:
Then and Now**

Presented by:
Dr. Michael Lukens

November 2

**Present Them to God Most High:
A Panel on Funeral Rites and Planning**

Panelists will be:
Mike Cotter
Fr. Andy Cribben, O. Praem.
Sheila DeLuca
Joe Schinkten

November 16

**Twilight Retreat:
Hospitality—Becoming People
of Warm Welcome**

Presented by Dr. Bridget Burke Ravizza

For additional information or to receive a program guide, visit www.norbertines.org or call the Norbertine Center for Spirituality at **(920) 337-4315**.

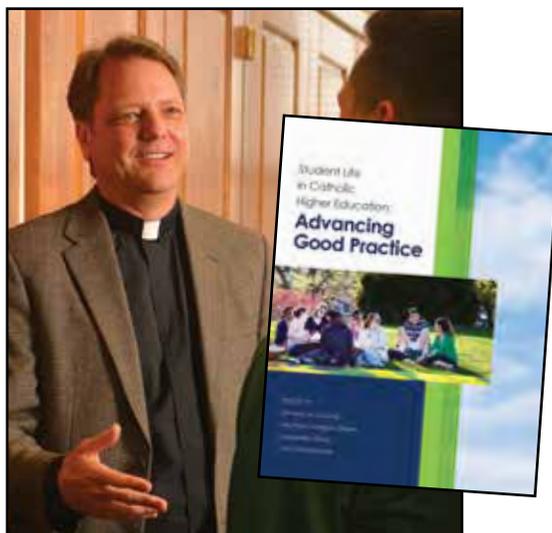
News, Honors, and Distinctions



FR. JOHN TOURANGEAU, O. PRAEM., recently earned a Ph.D. in Organization Development from Benedictine University, Lisle, Illinois. In addition to completing his dissertation on clergy sexual abuse, an academic paper based on his dissertation was approved for presentation at the Midwest Academy of Management (Organization Development track) with a “Best Paper” nomination and an invitation to speak at a Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) gathering, both in October 2017. For more information or to request a copy of his dissertation, contact john.tourangeau@snc.edu.



In May, **FR. MICHAEL BRENNAN, O. PRAEM.**, received the Paul Bechtold Library’s Faculty Choice Award for his article, “Matthew’s Fifth Antithesis and Domestic Violence” at the symposium for *Theophilus: The Student Journal of Catholic Theological Union* (CTU), Chicago. Also in May, Fr. Brennan completed his Masters of Divinity, and completed an M.A. in Scripture in October. Both degrees are granted by CTU. His award-winning article can be read online: theophilusjournal.org (Vol. 4, No. 1 – May 2, 2017).



FR. JAY FOSTNER, O. PRAEM., PH.D., vice president for mission and student affairs and assistant professor of psychology at St. Norbert College, recently published “The Death of a Student: Lessons from a Catholic Campus”—one of 34 chapters in the book, *Student Life in Catholic Higher Education: Advancing Good Practice*. Published by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, this book is meant to be a very practical guide for new student affairs leaders at Catholic colleges and can be ordered online: www.accunet.org/publications.



IN MEMORIAM



LENTEN LESSONS AND CHANTS AT ST. NORBERT ABBEY

In April, the Norbertine Community of St. Norbert Abbey offered Lenten Lessons and Chants as an opportunity for everyone to prepare for the Easter Feast. The abbey church was filled with praise of God's Mercy through Word (Scripture and other Christian writings), rich silence, and sacred music sung by Norbertine cantors and the Abbey Singers of St. Norbert College.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next year, Lenten Lessons and Chants will be held on Sunday, February 25, 2018, at 7 p.m. in the Church of St. Norbert Abbey. Details will be posted online at www.norbertines.org.

Lenten Lessons and Chants in the abbey church (above). Fr. Bartholomew Agar, O. Praem., reads sacred Scripture (center). Frater Anh Tran, O. Praem., assists with candle lighting (left).



FR. GERY MEEHAN, O. PRAEM., passed into God's Eternal Kingdom on August 23, 2017.

Fr. Meehan was born on July 6, 1934, in Philadelphia, where in 1952 he graduated from the Norbertine Southeast Catholic High School. He received a B.A. degree in philosophy from St. Norbert College (SNC) in 1957.

Upon entering the Norbertine Community of St. Norbert Abbey, Fr. Meehan was vested as a novice on August 28, 1952. He professed Simple Vows on August 28, 1954, professed Solemn Vows on August 28, 1957, and was ordained to the priesthood on June 18, 1960.

Fr. Meehan began his teaching and administrative ministry at Abbot Pennings High School, spending 19 years in the classroom and 11 years as principal. For almost 30 years, Fr. Meehan assisted with weekend parish ministry at St. Mary Parish in De Pere. He was named pastor of St. Norbert College Parish at Old St. Joseph Church and director of campus ministry from August 1993 to February 2001. After his ministry at SNC, Fr. Meehan ministered to the Hispanic parishioners at St. Willebrord Parish in Green Bay.

He lovingly and faithfully touched the hearts and souls of hundreds of students and parishioners and will be sadly missed.



FR. ROMAN VANASSE, O. PRAEM., passed into God's Eternal Kingdom on October 7, 2017.

Fr. Vanasse was born on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1930, in Fall River, Massachusetts. He received a B.A. degree in philosophy from St. Norbert College (SNC) in 1957.

Upon entering St. Norbert Abbey, he was vested as a novice on August 28, 1954. He professed Simple Vows on August 28, 1956, Solemn Vows on August 28, 1959, and was ordained to the priesthood on September 1, 1960.

After graduating from SNC, Fr. Vanasse earned his S.T.D. in Systematic Theology from the Gregorian University in Rome and studied Biblical Languages in Chicago and Jerusalem. He became a tenured professor of theology at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. In 1988, he accepted a Vatican appointment as International Chaplain for Aid to the Church in Need at its headquarters in Germany. In 2002, he was appointed Administrator of the Norbertine Community at St. Joseph's Priory in Queen's Park, Western Australia.

Fr. Vanasse graciously and faithfully served the world in ministry.



Read more about Fr. Meehan and Fr. Vanasse online at www.norbertines.org.



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

2017 FALL/WINTER CALENDAR FOR ST. NORBERT ABBEY



Oct. 19

OCTOBER

- 18 – Coffee and Conversation with Fr. Benny Jacobs, 10-11 a.m.
- 19 – The Conrad J. Kratz, O. Praem. Abbey Lecture Series (Dr. Paul Wadell), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 21 – Canon John O. Bruce Memorial Organ concert (Zoltán Borbély), Abbey Church, 2 p.m.
- 24 – Reformation in the Church: Then and Now (Dr. Michael Lukens), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 30 – Measure for Measure: A Shakespearean Play on the Big Screen (Fr. David Komatz), 6:30-8:30 p.m.



November 16

NOVEMBER

- 1 – Solemnity of All Saints Mass, Abbey Church, 4:30 p.m.
- 2 – Solemnity of All Souls Mass, Abbey Church, 4:30 p.m.
- 2 – Present Them to God Most High: A Panel on Funeral Rites and Planning, 6:30-8 p.m.
- 6 – Measure for Measure: A Shakespearean Play on the Big Screen (Fr. David Komatz), 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- 8 – Between the Pages Book Discussion: Uncommon Prayer (Fr. John Bostwick), 10:15-11:15 a.m.
- 13 – Feast of All Saints of the Order, Abbey Church, 4:30 p.m.
- 14 – Homeless But Not Hopeless: The Challenge of Homeless Youth in Northeast Wisconsin, 6:30-8 p.m.
- 16 – Twilight Retreat: Hospitality—Becoming People of Warm Welcome (Dr. Bridget Burke Ravizza), 5-8 p.m.
- 21 – Caring for Our Veterans (Lancing Gerdmann, George Kamps, Timothy Mayer, Paul Smith), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 23 – Thanksgiving Day Mass, Abbey Church, 8:30 a.m.



December 14

DECEMBER

- 2 – Advent Presentation: To Wait on Others is to Await His Return (Fr. David Beaudry), 9:15-10:15 a.m.
- 5 – We Were Once Strangers: Understanding Immigration Issues in Our Time, 6:30-8 p.m.
- 6 – Coffee and Conversation with Fr. David Komatz, 10-11 a.m.
- 9 – Advent Presentation: Voices from the Wilderness (Sr. Marla Clercx), 9:15-10:15 a.m.
- 14 – Shepherds, Angels, and Mangers: Deciphering the Infancy Narratives (Dr. John Craghan), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 16 – Advent Presentation: Hear God's Voice in the Deserts of Our Lives (Fr. Michael Brennan), 9:15-10:15 a.m.
- 24 – Christmas Eve Vigil Mass, Abbey Church, 8 p.m.
- 25 – Christmas Day Mass, Abbey Church, 10 a.m.



January 20

JANUARY

- 1 – New Year's Day Mass, Abbey Church, 10 a.m.
- 11 – The Gospel of Mark (Dr. John Craghan), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 12-14 – The Magi Made it Home Safely (Fr. David Pleier), Friday, 5 p.m.-Sunday, Noon
- 17 – Coffee and Conversation with Frater Johnathan Turba, 10-11 a.m.
- 20 – Morning of Renewal for Women (Featuring D. Vanessa White), 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 23 – The Spirituality of Garrison Keillor (Deacon Steve Meyer), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 25 – The Many Faces of Faith: Judaism (Rabbi Moishe Steigmann), 6:30-8 p.m.



February 17

FEBRUARY

- 17 – A Day for Men (Terry Nelson Johnson, Most Rev. Robert Morneau, Fr. James Neilson, Dick Bennett), 9:15 a.m.-5 p.m.
- 25 – Lenten Lessons and Chants, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.

For a complete list of programs and retreats at the Norbertine Center for Spirituality at St. Norbert Abbey, please visit www.norbertines.org or call (920) 337-4315 to receive our latest program guide.