Soon after my vestition as a novice, I remember hearing that I was a Norbertine first and that ministry as a priest or brother would come later, determined in part by my gifts, the needs of the Community and those of the local Church. The years of formation that would follow focused on my first and most important ministry — life as a Norbertine, life in community.

Within the context of my religious life and the many close friendships forged during those formative years, I would find the best way to use my gifts and talents for others. As such, I discovered that ministry was internal, external and mutually supportive — something I did not fully realize when I entered the Community.

I was drawn to the Community in part because I had a strong desire to teach — and I had experienced firsthand Norbertines who taught, and taught well. But the more Norbertines I met, the more I realized they had many different ministries — pastors, chaplains, counselors, spiritual directors, administrators, missionaries, retreat directors, doctors and more. We are, as our motto suggests, truly a Community “prepared for every good work.”

As Norbertines we have been blessed to use our talents in multiple ways and have been challenged by superiors and the needs of the Church to undertake works never on our minds when we joined the Community. Times and needs change; we as a Community must remain aware of the new challenges and calls. Our Constitutions speak of such:

“In our days, we are involved in profound changes of every kind. We are passing from a more static worldview to a more dynamic and evolutionary one. From this basic fact there arises a new complex of problems which challenge us to new analyses and syntheses. We are constantly forced to adapt our lives, both individual and collective, to new conditions.” (Norbertine Constitutions, No. 1)

I pray that God will continue to bless this Community with dedicated men committed to the apostolic way of life and filled with the desire to serve God’s people in the best way we can throughout all the ages.
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Some of us Norbertines came to the Abbey to be priests: We had visions of teaching, serving in parishes, doing mission work or participating in other forms of active service to God and God’s people. Others of us came drawn by the ideal of a life of community and worship, study and prayer. Of course, we all soon learned that Norbertine life is not a choice between community and ministry, but a call to community at the service of the Church and the world.

A Christian community does not exist for itself. As Christ himself came “for the life of the world,” Christian communities exist for the glory of God and for service to the larger community. The balance between community and ministry may play out differently for a given abbey or an individual Norbertine, but in all cases, community and ministry are integral to our vocation.

Life in community — living, sharing, worshipping and working together — is in itself a ministry. It is a gift to the Church and a witness to Gospel values. Typically, Norbertine communities are not only homes for our members but also centers of prayer, worship and hospitality that draw many for rest and renewal.

Norbertine communities do not exist in isolation. Embedded in a local church, we are responsive to those among whom we live. The spiritual and human needs of our neighbors call Norbertines to serve in parishes, in schools and colleges, in chaplaincies, in justice and peace ministries, in service to the poor and in other forms of outreach.

Like anyone who feels the conflicting tug of work and family, a Norbertine can experience tension between the need to invest time and energy at home and the legitimate demands of pastoral or professional work. Choices must be made among, say, attending an event, meeting with a couple preparing for marriage and sharing in the liturgy and life of the Abbey.

This is a necessary and, hopefully, a creative tension. Living between the expectations of presence and participation in the life of the Norbertine community and the life of ministry requires discernment on the part of the Norbertine; it also requires a willingness on the part of both his religious community and those to whom he ministers to respect his discernment as he works to live faithfully and responsibly in his particular situation.

When all is said and done, community needs ministry needs community. The Abbey requires a sense of purpose and mission to be a truly Christian community, since self-absorption is as deadly to a religious community as it is to an individual. But equally, effective ministry finds in the communal life of the Abbey the energy and strength needed for outreach and mission. With appropriate balance, these two dimensions of Norbertine — indeed, Christian — life feed, nourish and support each other.

Norbertines need not choose between contemplation and ministry.
Rather, as Fr. John Bostwick, O.Praem., writes, their communal life fuels their work in the world, which in turn feeds their communal life.
The Norbertines’ ministries are as varied as the Norbertines themselves. As such, the Order offers its members two paths to permanent commitment — priesthood and brotherhood. Fr. John Tourangeau, O.Praem., St. Norbert Abbey vocation coordinator, explains where these paths converge and diverge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquirer</th>
<th>Every man interested in becoming a Norbertine priest or brother begins his exploration as an inquirer, participating with the Order in Eucharist, prayer and discernment. “It’s about a relationship and experience over time,” Fr. Tourangeau says.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>A Norbertine novice receives his habit and pursues two years of formation in the Order, engaging in prayer and contemplation, studying the Order’s history and spirituality, and receiving spiritual direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frater</td>
<td>Once fraters complete their philosophical studies, they begin theological studies toward a master’s degree in divinity. After three years, they typically are ordained as deacons, usually serving a parish in this capacity for a year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>Some Norbertines, Fr. Tourangeau says, “feel called to a particular kind of ministry that is not ordained ministry” and become brothers. For them, professional, vocational or theological education continues as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>After completing his master’s degree, a Norbertine frater may petition to be ordained a priest, typically six to eight years after entering the Order.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Vows</th>
<th>Following the novitiate, fraters and brothers may choose to profess simple vows, spending three years living in poverty, celibacy and obedience to discern with the Order the mutual desire for a lifelong commitment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solemn Vows</td>
<td>After five or more years of connection with the Norbertines, a man may profess solemn vows, making a lifelong commitment to the Order.</td>
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</table>

The Chosen Path
The Many Faces

At the heart of St. Norbert Abbey’s mission is a moving charge: “The Spirit lays a claim on us to engage in a variety of ministries to one another, to the people of God, and to the world at large.” Norbertines fulfill that commitment through traditional ministries as well as those that meet the new and ever-changing needs of the world they serve. Here, the ministries of five Norbertines from across the country illustrate the myriad ways these men live their Order’s mission and respond to God’s call to service.

Making God’s Spirit Visible

After Fr. Stephen Rossey, O.Praem., was ordained in 1959, he spent more than 20 years teaching art in Catholic high schools in northeast Wisconsin, Philadelphia and Delaware. During that time he remained a prolific artist, completing a master’s degree in art at the University of Notre Dame and studying under world-renowned enamelist Kenneth Bates.

“In St. Paul’s writings we see the Church made up of people with many talents,” Fr. Rossey writes. “Christ admonishes us not to waste whatever talent we have been given. This places an obligation on artists to develop and share their gift in order to put it at the service of others.”

Fr. Rossey has done so in ways beyond helping students appreciate and express themselves through art. Since 1984, he has served as St. Norbert Abbey’s environmentalist and sacristan, overseeing the Order’s sacred setting and vestments. He also consults with the Green Bay Diocese and other religious organizations on their liturgical spaces.

Through this ministry he fulfills the Norbertine call to both contemplation and action. “Art strives to make visible to the world the spirit of the invisible God,” Fr. Rossey writes. “This translation demands reflection, synthesis and contemplation to search out the hidden meaning. The translation into visible form takes action — the creation of an artwork. One is necessary for the other.”

Caring for Community

Br. Dennis Butler, O.Praem., came to the Norbertines relatively late in life, and little by little — which is not to say half-heartedly. He had been a Trappist monk in his younger years, but life circumstances and, Butler believes, the hand of God took him elsewhere for a time.

As he approached retirement from accounting work in Albuquerque, N.M., he attended Mass at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Catholic Community, the church of Santa Maria de la Vid Priory, and became acquainted with the Norbertines there. Says Br. Butler, “They frequently invited me to dinner, and that’s how I got to know them.”

He eventually became a Norbertine associate and, four years further on, a Norbertine brother: He waited to take that final step, he says, until “I felt like I really could make a positive contribution to the Norbertines.” He does so mainly within the walls of the Priory, serving as head cantor, writing on behalf of the Order and managing household needs.

He also has spent 20 years shepherding those joining the Catholic Church through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. He writes, “One can watch from week to week the candidates grow in their faith and love of God.”

Br. Butler, too, has grown, both in the Order and outside it. “I really feel that every phase of my life has been directed by God and that I was doing what I was expected to be doing,” he says.
As professor and interim chair of psychology at Jackson State University in Mississippi, Fr. Richard Chiles, O.Praem., sees his life and ministry as carrying on a Norbertine tradition. Chiles recognized education as essential to the Order from the time he first encountered the Norbertines while serving as a U.S. Air Force captain in Minot, N.D.

“Norbertines have been outstanding teachers and scholars from the beginnings of our Order, especially (at) the Abbey of St. Norbert in De Pere,” Fr. Chiles writes. Their educational ideals go beyond the acquisition of knowledge, he adds, having “something to do with the formation of the soul as well.”

He lives out those ideals in his own life. “In my ministry of teaching, I have seen young people through the educational process discover the wonders of learning and the possibilities for a life they had not dreamed,” Fr. Chiles writes.

What results is a kind of transformation or conversion, he adds — one he has experienced himself. “When one's life is a kind of ministry, everything one does flows from that dimension.”

For Fr. Chiles personally, that renders inseparable the balance of contemplation and action called for by his Order. “In so-called action, there is contemplation. In contemplation, there is a kind of action,” he writes. “That is simply how I live.”

Ordained in March 1968, Fr. Eugene Gries, O.Praem., spent some three decades as a priest-administrator, serving sequentially as dean of men, vice president for student life and pastoral director of campus ministry at St. Norbert College, his alma mater. He later acted as superior at the Norbertine residence on campus and as prior at St. Norbert Abbey.

While Fr. Gries approached these roles with a mind for ministry, becoming associate pastor at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Catholic Community in Albuquerque, N.M., opened something new in him.

Administrators operate out of their head most of the time,” Fr. Gries says. Among the parishioners he has served since 1998, he adds, “I found my heart.”

Pastoral duties sometimes move him to tears. “I have a hard time maintaining my composure if I have to bless a soldier going off to war,” Fr. Gries says.

But performing the sacraments can make him laugh, too. When one youngster confessed to chewing gum in class, Fr. Gries asked what happened when he got caught. “He paused and smiled and said, ‘I haven’t been caught yet,'” Fr. Gries recalls.

Laughing or crying, Fr. Gries relishes his ministry as a pastor. “I have a chance to reassure people God loves them and to be a messenger of God’s compassion and mercy,” he says. “People need to hear that. They don’t hear it enough.”

For 14 years, Fr. James Baraniak, O.Praem., has fulfilled a ministry unique among Norbertines. Come football season, the pastor of St. Norbert College Parish splits his time between campus and the gridiron as Catholic chaplain for the Green Bay Packers.

“I go everywhere they go,” Fr. Baraniak says. “In addition to having Mass before every game on game day, (coach Mike McCarthy) has Mass during training camp, and he has Mass during organized team activities. Whenever the Packers are together, he wants me there.”

Fr. Baraniak’s involvement with the team led him to Catholic Athletes for Christ (CAC), which serves Catholic athletes in the practice of their faith. Through CAC, Baraniak provided pastoral ministry at the March NFL Scouting Combine in Indianapolis and said the opening Mass at a November Major League Baseball conference in Hollywood, Calif.

His sports ministry sees him zipping across the country and across town, especially on Sundays when the Packers play at home and he says Mass on campus before and after the games. Despite the hectic schedule, it’s a ministry he relishes in combination with his other roles, which include a Green Bay correctional facility chaplaincy.

“I’ve got the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the imprisoned and the free,” he says. “I go to bed tired, but it’s a beautiful life.”
Those unfamiliar with the Norbertines of St. Norbert Abbey might assume that a typical day for these devout men revolves around standing at the altar and saying Mass. However, their service comes in forms far different from that most obvious one. Many of the 67 individuals tied to the Abbey minister in ways that seem decidedly nontraditional at first glance. Such is the case with those who serve in health-related ministries, from medical clinics in remote villages to jails, prisons and inner-city hospitals — wherever those in need seek mental, emotional and physical solace.
HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY

Fr. Bob Campbell, O. Praem., serves as a board-certified chaplain at Presbyterian Hospital in Albuquerque, N.M. It's one of the largest acute care hospitals in the state, and among a handful of hospitals in New Mexico’s largest city of more than 520,000 people.

Each weekday, Fr. Campbell reports to the hospital, visiting patients who wish to have their spiritual needs met through Confession, the Anointing of the Sick or the Eucharist. At a time when a critical shortage of priests leaves bishops hard pressed to staff parishes across the country, Fr. Campbell acknowledges that serving as a hospital chaplain is a unique position to be in — one that he does not take for granted.

“As Norbertines, we recognize that there are many underserved ministries, of which this is one,” he says. “While these patients are here in the hospital, I am their pastor and they are very appreciative of that. And because parish priests are extremely overworked, I am able to relieve some of that pressure by taking care of this need.

“I love going in and meeting with a patient and just hanging out and having a conversation,” he continues. “When I’m done seeing the people who’ve requested me, it’s a very satisfying feeling, knowing that I helped someone. I find the healing rituals of the Catholic Church very comforting, and the sacrament of anointing and healing is very satisfying for me.”

In addition to meeting with patients, Fr. Campbell says Mass in the hospital chapel and sits on the hospital’s ethics committee. He also oversees the volunteer Communion ministers and serves overnight on call for emergencies, such as providing Last Rites for dying patients.

Given the setting, there are days when Fr. Campbell’s job can be very trying.

“Ministering on the pediatric unit is the most challenging, regardless of your faith,” he says. “I visit with parents of infants and children who are severely ill, and that is when I have to be the most compassionate, the most present, and just be witness that God is with them and with their child at that moment. But there’s no getting around the tragedy of a sick or dying child.”

Recognizing the fragility of life, he takes precautions with his own health, eating right and exercising regularly to remain strong for himself and those he serves. He refers to Psalm 23 each day as a sort of protective shield against the day’s challenges:

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

Of the verse he says, “It’s not saying you won’t encounter bad things in your life. It’s just that when we do come to that dark valley, we will be fearless because we know God is with us.”

MEDICAL PRACTICE

Fr. Brian Prunty, O.Praem., has had a variety of roles over the years in the medical settings in which he’s ministered.

After graduating from the physician assistant program at St. Louis University Medical School in 1981, Fr. Prunty took his first job at Chicago’s Cook County Jail, the largest single-site county jail in the U.S., housing nearly 10,000 male and female inmates. Each day he used his medical training to assist a unique population in a most unique setting.

Unfortunately, just after getting comfortable in the job, an accident in 1986 forced him to leave. After convalescing, he accepted an invitation from Fr. Jack MacCarthy, O.Praem., physician at and director of the Santa Clotilde Medical Center in Peru, to serve at the 20-bed hospital on the Napo River, deep in the Peruvian rainforest.

“We were really far out,” he recalls of the post. “No telephones, no televisions, no roads. You could only travel by river. Things were primitive. We generated electricity three hours a day for sterilization, to perform emergency C-sections. In the jungle, I was alone a lot of the time. But we did a significant amount of surgery and sometimes we had to work by kerosene lantern.”

“One week a month we went up and down the river vaccinating children. Occasionally we had the chance to set broken bones. Sometimes I’d put on my stole and perform baptisms, marriages or funerals. It was always something different, but very rewarding.”

After four years in Peru, Fr. Prunty returned to the U.S. and to Cook County Jail, where he supervised a staff of physician assistants, oversaw the medical clinic each day and supervised the intake process at the jail.

“I really enjoyed the medical work, more than anything I’ve done in my life,” he says.

“In jail, many of my patients didn’t even know I was a priest because I was hired as a physician assistant and not a priest. But my colleagues knew. The relationships I had with the doctors, nurses and the other physician assistants were very rewarding. There were a number of people in the jail who were dying, and I prayed with them.

“The ability to heal in a very significant way was extremely satisfying.”

RETREAT FACILITATION

It is said that a healthy mind is just as important as a healthy body. That’s why Norbertines like Fr. Conrad Kratz, O.Praem., director of the Norbertine Center for Spirituality, also minister to many by leading retreats.

“The Norbertine Center has always recognized the importance of a holistic approach to a healthy spirituality. The mind, the body and the soul must work together for the good if a balanced and examined life is to be achieved,” says Fr. Kratz.

Lisa Maas, people’s service director for St. Mary’s Hospital in Green Bay, recognized that in asking the Center to facilitate a series of 20 faith-based retreats for hospital employees in 2009. These retreats, led by Fr. Kratz and Center programming director Judy Turba, helped attendees connect as a team, communicate better and focus on their purpose as an organization.

Choosing the Norbertines for the task was logical, given the two organizations’ shared focus, Maas says. “We both have a ministry and we’re both in occupations or vocations that serve others. It just seems right that they are able to make those connections for us.”

“We believe this type of retreat gives back to our colleagues for all of the emotional support they provide to our patients, and we believe it’s important to give them time to re-energize and reflect on their spiritual journey,” Maas says. “It is really a recharging of the heart.”

Turba agrees. “It’s a great experience for me as well,” she says. “It’s a joy to work with Fr. Conrad, and with these opportunities, whatever I give, I get back. You hear many stories of faith, and that is very fulfilling.”

The spirit with which the Norbertines lead retreats seems to provide fulfillment for retreatants as well. As one St. Mary’s retreat participant said in an evaluation, “How often do you get assigned learning that turns out to be exactly what your life needed?”
Under the leadership of Fr. Ken De Groot, O.Praem., two cultures come together at Green Bay’s St. Willebrord Parish.

Bajo la dirección del Padre Ken De Groot, O.Praem., dos culturas se juntan en la parroquia de San Willebrord de Green Bay.

Two Cultures, One Church
Dos Culturas, Una Iglesia

By/Por Judy Turba  Translated by/Traducido por
Br. Terrence Lauerman, O.Praem.
When Fr. Ken De Groot, O.Praem., became pastor of St. Willebrord Parish in downtown Green Bay some 30 years ago, he could not have imagined the vibrant Anglo-Hispanic center the church would become. Nonetheless, through eight Spanish and English Masses each weekend, a food pantry and more than 60 committees and ministries, including court advocacy, the parish under Fr. De Groot’s leadership meets the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of all its parishioners, regardless of their background.

“Fr. Ken is a gentle person committed to justice and the well-being of all people,” says Sr. Melanie Maczka, SSC, pastoral associate. “He had a dream of bringing two communities together who appreciate and respect each other.”

That dream arose in part thanks to the late Fr. Harvey Toonen, O.Praem. Fr. Toonen became involved with Green Bay’s small Hispanic population after returning from a Norbertine mission in Peru and approached Fr. De Groot about inviting the community, which had no real parish home, to join St. Willebrord.

After a year of deliberation, Fr. De Groot and the parish council did so. “On Dec. 12, 1990, on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the first Spanish Mass was offered,” Fr. De Groot says.

Since that time, Fr. De Groot has worked to support both communities within the church. “Historically, all communities have struggled with newly found diversity,” says Brown County Circuit Judge Sue Bischel, “and Brown County is no exception. Fr. Ken is a tremendous example of a person who has only one ‘agenda’ — to not only assist newcomers in assimilating into our community, but also help them contribute to it in a positive way, so that the entire community will benefit from diversity.”

Director of Catholic Charities Karen Johnston says, “(Fr. Ken) is truly a man of vision who long before the community celebrated diversity took simple first steps to be welcoming to all who came to the parish. He has been successful at healing divisions and for standing with those who left their own lands in order to find work, security and welcome in a new place. He is an inspiration to all of us who walk the path of justice for immigrants.”

“Fr. Ken has touched so many lives in so many ways. Not only does the Green Bay community know of him and his goodness, much of Mexico is also aware of all he has done.... Members of my community trust him and rely on him,” says St. Willebrord deacon Luis Sanchez.

“Because of his love, faith and passion, he was able to bring two communities together and made the motto of the church — ‘Puertas abiertas, Corazones abiertos — Open doors, Open hearts’ — come alive.”

Fr. De Groot’s heart has been opened, too. “My parishioners offer me heartfelt respect, love and appreciation. And I have come to understand the deep faith, deep family values and the deep relationship with God within the Hispanic community,” he says.

As he celebrates his 50th jubilee as a priest in 2011, Fr. De Groot has one hope for the future: “That my health will allow me to continue to serve the people, preferably the Hispanic community.”

He concludes with a phrase borrowed from his beloved parishioners. “Si Dios quiere” — if God desires it.

Founded in 1864 by a group of 47 Dutch and Flemish families, St. Willebrord Parish in Green Bay has a history of openness — including openness to changing the spelling of its namesake saint, Willibrord!

For the legend of how that new spelling arose, as well as a complete history of the parish, visit www.stwillys.org/ourparish.htm.

When the Padre Ken De Groot, O.Praem., se hizo pastor de la parroquia de San Willebrord hace unos 30 años, no podía imaginarse lo vibrante que llegaría a ser el centro de la iglesia anglo-hispano. Sin embargo, por ocho misas en español e inglés cada fin de semana, una dispensa de comida y más de 60 comités y ministerios que incluyen ayuda legal, la parroquia bajo la dirección del Padre De Groot satisface las necesidades espirituales, físicas, e emocionales de todos los feligreses, sin pensar en sus antecedentes.

“El Padre Ken es una persona bondadosa enfocada en la justicia y en el bienestar de toda la gente” dice la Hermana Melanie Maczka, SSC, asociada pastoral. “Él tenía un sueño de unir las dos comunidades que se aprecian y se respetan la una y la otra.”

Aquel sueño se inicia en parte gracias al Padre Harvey Toonen, O.Praem. El Padre Toonen se comprometió con la pequeña población hispano de Green Bay después de regresar de la misión norbertina en el Perú y le pidió a Padre De Groot sobre la posibilidad de invitarle a la comunidad hispana a asistir a San Willebrord porque no tenía una parroquia suya.

Después de un año de pensar en el asunto, el Padre De Groot y el consejo parroquial hicieron una decisión afirmativa. “El 12 de diciembre de 1990, por la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, la primera misa en español se ofreció,” dice el Padre De Groot.

Desde aquel entonces, el Padre De Groot ha trabajado para apoyar a las dos comunidades dentro de la iglesia. “Históricamente, todas las comunidades han luchado con las diversidades nuevamente encontradas,” dice la juez Sue Bischel, “y el Condado Brown no es ninguna excepción. El Padre Ken es un ejemplo tremendo de una persona de un solo ‘propósito’ — no sólo de ayudar a los recién llegados en asimilarse en nuestra comunidad, sino también en facilitar su participación en ella en una manera constructiva, para que toda la comunidad se beneficie de la diversidad.”

La Directora de Caridades Cátolicas Karen Johnson dice, “(el Padre Ken) es verdaderamente un hombre de visión que mucho antes de que la comunidad se celebró la diversidad tomó la decisión inicial de hacerla bienvenida a todos que lleguen a la parroquia. Ha tenido mucho éxito en sanar las divisiones y apoyar a los que han salido de sus propias naciones para encontrar trabajo, seguridad, y la bienvenida en un lugar nuevo. Él es una inspiración para todos nosotros que caminamos la senda de la justicia para los inmigrantes.”

“El Padre Ken ha tocado tantas vidas en tantas maneras. No sólo la comunidad de Green Bay lo conoce y lo sabe de su bondad, sino también gran parte de México sabe de lo mucho que ha hecho.... Los miembros de mi comunidad confían en él y cuentan con él,” dice el diácono Luis Sanchez de San Willebrord.

“Debido a su amor, fe, y pasión, él era capaz de unir las dos comunidades y hacer vivo el lema de su iglesia — ‘Puertas abiertas, corazones abiertos.’

El corazón del Padre De Groot se ha abierto también. “Mis feligreses me ofrecen sinceridad, amor, y aprecio. Y he llegado a entender la profundidad de la fe, valores familiares, y la relación con Dios dentro de la comunidad hispana,” dice él.

Al celebrar el aniversario de cincuenta años de su sacerdocio en 2011, el Padre De Groot tiene una esperanza para el futuro: “Que mi salud me permita servir a la gente, preferiblemente a la comunidad hispana.”

Él concluye con la frase prestada de sus feligreses amados. “Si Dios quiere.”

Fundada en 1864 por un grupo de 47 familias holandesas y flamencas, la Parroquia de San Willebrord de Green Bay tiene una historia de estar abierto – que incluye la voluntad de cambiar el deletero de su santo patrón, Willibrord!

Para la leyenda de como se realizó el cambio de letra como también toda la historia de la parroquia, visite www.stwillys.org/ourparish.htm.

...for I was a stranger and you welcomed me...” Matthew 25:35

“Fui forastero y ustedes me recibieron....” Mateo 25:35
On Jan. 23 the Abbey was filled with 170 women for the second annual Morning of Spiritual Renewal for Women, featuring nine programs for the body, mind and soul. As one participant said, “This is always a wonderful, energy-filled, spiritual experience. We hope to attend this sacred event annually.”

A similar day will be held for men on Oct. 30, with numerous Norbertines presenting on topics such as male role models, fathers and sons, images of God and scripture.

In addition, the Center will host a number of summer retreats. Beginning June 4, Fr. John Zagarella, O.Praem., will facilitate a preached retreat titled “Forgiveness: The Eight-Day Journey.” Summer directed retreats during the weeks of June 20 and July 6 also will offer time for prayer, silence and solitude, with a daily opportunity to meet with a spiritual director. Abbey amenities include numerous contemplative prayer spaces, a cloister garden, an indoor pool, tennis courts and scenic, spacious grounds.

The Center is excited to offer a pilgrimage this October to Santa Maria de la Vid Priory and Hermitage Retreat Center in Albuquerque, N.M. Set on 70 acres of desert, this holy place of tranquility overlooks the Sandia Mountains and includes a desert chapel, lovely church and extensive theological library. Retreat days will be filled with the solitude of the desert, spiritual talks and travel to various Native American sacred sites. Because the pilgrimage is limited to 10 participants, interested individuals should contact the Center soon.

In addition to the 20 St. Mary’s Hospital staff retreats facilitated by Fr. Conrad J. Kratz, O.Praem., and Judy Turba in 2009 (see related story on page 6), the Center staff, including Sr. Judy Miller, CSJ, continues to offer parish and school staff retreats either at the Abbey or on site. Each retreat is unique and designed with the needs of the group in mind.

The Center’s fall brochure, available in August, will detail all these events and other upcoming programs.

For additional information or a complete list of programs and retreats, visit www.norbertines.org or call the Center at 920-337-4315.
God’s Call to Forgive

To Christians, St. Paul declares, “The ministry of reconciliation has been entrusted to us!” (2 Corinthians 5:18) Forgiveness and reconciliation have been a fundamental focus of St. Norbert and his Order; Norbert was masterful at it!

Through a January 2010 retreat, our Community explored this essential element of our common life and ministry, asking “How can we get along better, so we can help others get along better, in Christ?” To probe that question, our retreat master, Paul Wadell, professor of religious studies at St. Norbert College, exposed us to a remarkable book: Miroslav Volf’s “The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World” (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006).

The book, which grew out of a talk Volf gave for St. Norbert College’s Killeen Chair Lecture Series, offers an honest, insightful and gritty theological reflection that breaks new ground among the many recent books on the topic of forgiveness.

Volf, professor of systematic theology at Yale University, knows firsthand the struggle to forgive. Married to an American and connected with religion, he was automatically suspect in 1980s communist Yugoslavia. Volf was imprisoned and suffered gross abuse and torture at the hands of his tormentor, “Captain G.”

A person of faith, Volf knew he needed to forgive, but at first, he didn’t know how. The “end,” or goal, Volf refers to in the book’s title points to the answer: remembering the whole “thing,” not only the offense. It also signals how important it is to remember God’s goal: That all persons — no exceptions — sit together at the banquet table of heaven!

The alternative to forgiveness — “slicing” people out of our lives if they “wrong” us — doesn’t work for Volf, and it doesn’t work with family, friends, religious life or the Church! While forgiveness and reconciliation aren’t easy, they are required.

Though not a leisure read, the book offers a profound treatment of this challenge — to remember correctly and to forgive — along with valuable inspiration to anyone pursuing such a “Gospel struggle.”

The book isn’t a road map; we all must search the merciful path’s details ourselves. But it’s a reminder that for the sake of integrity, we must remember “rightly” — that is, completely — even “in a violent world.”
With its outreach to the Hispanic community, the Priory of St. Moses the Black in Jackson, Miss., strives to serve some of the estimated 100,000 people from Central and South America living and working in the state. One Norbertine who stands out in this regard is Fr. Sebastian Schalk, O.Praem. After a career in Peru, he has dedicated himself to the Latino community in Jackson and beyond, impacting individuals of every Latin American nationality in the region.

"I see my present ministry as both internal — being treasurer of the Community and contributing to its prayer life — and external — serving the sacramental needs of the Spanish-speaking of this area," Fr. Schalk says.

He finds satisfaction in knowing that the work he does is useful for the community. Says Fr. Schalk, "The most important aspect of any job has always been for me that it be worth doing, rather than any remuneration or job titles or other such things that people may see."

After spending the bulk of his 60 years as a Norbertine in education and administration, Fr. Anthony Maes, O.Praem., has moved into another career: prison and hospital ministry. He serves as Catholic chaplain at both the Yazoo City Federal Corrections Complex and the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Hospital in Jackson.

"Prison and hospital ministry from the standpoint of service to God's people can hardly be bettered. They can also do a lot for the minister," Fr. De Wane says. "In prison ministry you become involved with men who have in the past made serious mistakes. At the same time, you find them engaging and often very devout Catholics. They are most appreciative for what you do for them, and you feel in a palpable way that your ministry is worthwhile.

"Ministry at the VA and at the prison is very humbling to the minister. One might say that they, the prisoners and patients, often minister to the minister."

The tragic death of a student is the dread of all educators. When St. Pius X High School in Albuquerque, N.M., faced such a tragedy, Fr. Anthony Maes, O.Praem., cried and prayed with students and their families, helping them discover the healing presence of God in the midst of grief and loss.

The situation is just one example of Fr. Maes’ service to the school. The only priest in the Archdiocese of New Mexico with both a graduate degree in educational administration and a state administrator’s license, he is uniquely qualified to serve St. Pius X as chaplain, theology department chair, and administration board member.

Scott Howard, St. Pius X teacher and former chair of theology, calls Fr. Maes’ presence at Albuquerque’s only Catholic high school vital.

"His ministry means that we have the sacraments available to us on a daily basis. I don’t think I have the words to express how significant this is for us as a Catholic community," Howard says.

Since nearly the beginning of Santa Maria de la Vid Priory in New Mexico, Norbertine priests have served a small community of sisters whose convent is down the street in the rural South Valley of Albuquerque. The Canossian Daughters of Charity depend on Fr. Nick Nirschl, O.Praem., to minister to their elderly sisters as well as to retreatants at their provincial headquarters and spirituality center.

With all diocesan priests immersed in their parish ministries, Fr. Nirschl has offered Mass, heard confessions and provided a quiet, loving pastoral presence to the sisters for the past 12 years. Says Sr. Connie Martinez, house superior, "He always has an insightful homily, and we are very thankful to the Lord that he can come be with us."
News, Honors and Distinctions

In Memoriam

FR. ALVIN VLADIMIR VESZEOLOVZKY, O.PRAEM.,
died on Nov. 4, 2009, at age 88. A member of Gödöllő
Abbey, Budapest, Hungary, Fr. Veszelovszky had
resided at St. Norbert Abbey since September 1951.
In the U.S., Fr. Veszelovszky taught at Archmere
Academy, Claymont, Del., and St. Norbert College.
From 1970 to 2005, he served as parochial vicar and
associate pastor at St. Willebrord Parish, Green Bay.
Born Vladimir Veszelovszky in Budapest, Hungary, on June 11, 1921, he
attended the Benedictine Gymnasium in Esztergom, Hungary, and
entered the Norbertine abbey at Jasow, Hungary, on Aug. 28, 1939.
He professed solemn vows on Sept. 8, 1943, and was ordained to the
priesthood on Nov. 1, 1944.
Fr. Veszelovszky received licentiate and doctoral degrees, both in
theology, from the Gregorian University, Rome, and the Catholic
University, Washington, D.C., respectively. He completed his doctoral
dissertation on Concelebration in the Roman Rite and rejoiced over
the Second Vatican Council's subsequent approval of Concelebration.

FR. ROBERT BERNARD REPPEN, O.PRAEM.,
died on Nov. 20, 2009, at age 90.
His many ministries as a Norbertine included
 teaching at Norbertine high schools in Philadelphia,
Green Bay and De Pere; serving in pastoral roles at
St. Willibrord Parish, Chicago, St. John the Evangelist
Parish, Essexville, Mich., and St. Joseph Parish,
Madison, Wis.; and acting as chaplain at medical centers in Mason
City, Iowa, Battle Creek, Mich., and Rockford, Ill. He also was chaplain
for a time at Holy Family Convent, Manitowoc, Wis.
Fr. Reppen was born on May 25, 1919, in Arcadia, Wis. He attended
St. Norbert High School in De Pere, where he later taught, and Holy
Cross Seminary, Notre Dame, Ind. He received a bachelor’s degree in
philosophy from St. Norbert College, De Pere.
Fr. Reppen entered St. Norbert Abbey on Aug. 28, 1940. He professed
simple vows on Aug. 28, 1942, and solemn vows on Aug. 28, 1945. He
was ordained to the priesthood on June 15, 1946.

FR. BILL RIBBENS, O.PRAEM.,
was appointed to the Access to Justice
Commission by the Wisconsin Supreme Court.
The commission develops and encourages
means of expanding access to the civil justice
system for unrepresented low-income
Wisconsin residents.

FR. ROBERT CAMPBELL, O.PRAEM.,
was commissioned the first Roman
Catholic police chaplain by the chief
of police in Albuquerque, N.M.

FR. ANDREW CRIBBEN, O.PRAEM.,
was appointed to the Wisconsin
Catholic Conference (WCC) Policy
Advisory Group. WCC offers a Catholic
perspective on state and federal
public policy debates.

The Jewish-Catholic Dialogue of New
Mexico dedicated its 2010 Spring
Colloquium, the 17th annual interfaith
event of its kind, to FR. VINCENT DE
LEERS, O.PRAEM. Fr. De Leers has
participated in the group since 1990.

FR. ALFRED MCBRIDE, O.PRAEM.,
recently authored the book "A Priest Forever: Nine
Signs of Renewal and Hope" (St. Anthony
Messenger Press, 2010) to coincide with the
Vatican’s Year for Priests in 2010. McBride
has written 45 books and hundreds of
published articles.

FR. JAMES NEILSON, O.PRAEM.,
assistant professor of art at St. Norbert
College, exhibited a collection of altered
book sculptures at the Biennial Art Faculty
Exhibition.

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was appointed to the Access to Justice
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BR. TERRENCE LAUERMAN, O.PRAEM.,
will teach English to Norbertine sisters at
the convent of El Toro in Zamora, Spain, this
summer to facilitate their participation in
the Norbertines’ General Chapter meeting in
De Pere in 2012. He also will visit the sites of
former Norbertine abbeys in Europe to prepare
for the 2011 Norbertine Heritage Tour.

Bishop David Ricken, of the Diocese of
Green Bay, has reappointed FR. TOM
HAGENDORF, O.PRAEM., pastor of Holy
Cross Parish. The Norbertines have served
the parish for more than 100 years.

ABBOT LADISLAS KERESZTESY-PARKER, O.PRAEM.,
died on Jan. 3, 2010, at age 94. He and six other
Norbertine canons who in 1950 escaped from
communist Hungary came to the U.S. as high school
teachers and founded St. Michael’s priory in Orange
County, Calif., in 1961.
When the Vatican elevated St. Michael’s to an abbey in
1984, Parker was named its first abbot. He served in the role until 1995.
Abbot Parker was born Francis Pürker on Dec. 19, 1915, in Hungary.
He received the name Ladislas upon entering the abbey in Csorna,
Hungary. He went on to earn a doctorate in theology at Gregorian
University in Rome and fluently spoke no fewer than seven languages.
# 2010 Spring and Summer Calendar for St. Norbert Abbey

## May
- **6** – Suffering as Transformative Power (Sr. Shawn Madigan), 6:30 – 8 p.m.
- **12** – Ireland Revisited (Kathy Mallon, Cheryl Murphy), 6:30 – 8 p.m.
- **13** – Golf as a Spiritual Discipline (Jim Smits), 6:30 – 8 p.m.
- **16** – Taizé Prayer, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
- **20** – Risk-Takers for the Faith: St. Norbert (Fr. Roman Vanasse), 6:30 – 8 p.m.
- **21** – Book Discussion: Wisdom of our Fathers (Jane Berkovitz), 10 – 11 a.m.

## June
- **4-11** – Summer Preached Retreat: Forgiveness (Fr. John Zagarella)
- **20** – Taizé Prayer, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
- **20-26** – Directed Retreat

## July
- **6-12** – Directed Retreat
- **18** – Taizé Prayer, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.

## August
- **15** – Taizé Prayer, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.

## September
- **8, 15, 22, 29** – Best Loved Stories of the Old Testament (Fr. Conrad Kratz), 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. or 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
- **12** – Mass for Emergency Response Personnel, Abbey Church, 10:00 a.m.
- **13, 20, 27** – Authentic Freedom (Sr. Judy Miller), 6:30 – 8:20 p.m.
- **13** – Book Discussion: “Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close” (Jane Berkovitz), 10 – 11 a.m.
- **15** – Twilight Retreat, 4 – 9 p.m.
- **15** – A Day Away: Nourishing Body, Mind, Spirit, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- **16** – Letters from Mother Teresa to a Norbertine Priest (Sr. Judy Miller, Judy Turba, Fr. John Tourangeau), 6:30 – 8 p.m.
- **19** – Taizé Prayer, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
- **30** – Mary: Who Is She? (Sr. Judy Miller, Fr. Willie Van De Loo), 6:30 – 8 p.m.

## October
- **2** – Retreat for Unemployed/Underemployed (Jim Smits)
- **4, 11, 18, 25** – Authentic Freedom (Sr. Judy Miller), 6:30 – 8:20 p.m.
- **5** – The Seven Petitions of the Our Father (Fr. Alfred McBride), 6:30 – 8 p.m.
- **6, 13, 20, 27** – Wednesdays for Women (Sr. Shawn Madigan, Sr. Judy Miller), 10 – 11:30 a.m. or 6:30 – 8 p.m.
- **8, 15, 22, 29** – Yoga and Centering Prayer (Sr. Judy Miller, Angela Lydia), 10 – 11:40 a.m.
- **13** – A Day Away: Nourishing Body, Mind, Spirit, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- **14** – Twilight Retreat, 4 – 9 p.m.
- **14** – Claiming Our Gifts (Judy Turba), 6:30 – 8 p.m.
- **17** – Taizé Prayer, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
- **30** – Morning of Spiritual Renewal for Men, 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.

The Norbertine Center for Spirituality fall brochure will be available in August, with a complete list of programs/retreats. Please visit [www.norbertines.org/programs.html](http://www.norbertines.org/programs.html) to view listings online or call 920-337-4315 to receive a copy.

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