From the Abbot

Prayer Always Reflects the World Around Me

In his resignation speech in February, Pope Benedict wrote: “I am well aware that this ministry, due to its essential spiritual nature, must be carried out not only with words and deeds, but no less with prayer and suffering. … in order to govern … and proclaim the Gospel, both strength of mind and body are necessary … I have had to recognize my incapacity to adequately fulfill the ministry entrusted to me. With regard to myself, I wish to also devotedly serve the Holy Church of God in the future through a life dedicated to prayer.”

There are many lessons placed before us by Benedict as he chose to retire from the Papacy. Perhaps one less obvious is the role that prayer plays in our lives. When our bodies can no longer keep up with the challenges of the physical world, we can still pray—it is a life-long gift and duty that changes as we experience life and all it places before us.

For many, our prayer enculturation began early. I remember vividly when my parents taught me my night prayers and meal prayers. The rosary was recited daily in the months of May and October. Sunday Mass attendance was sacrosanct. Catholic grade school would introduce many baby boomers to devotional prayer and exercises: rosaries, Stations of the Cross, monthly confessions, May celebrations, etc.

Vatican II ushered in various changes which encouraged greater participation in the liturgy and the life of the Church. Adapt we did to English in the liturgy, new music, retreats, theology, scriptural discussions and shared prayer.

Religious life would marshal in another chapter of my spiritual growth. I grew in my personal prayer life by studying and practicing other forms of prayer and meditation (lectio divina) while enriching all my prayer experiences through community prayer and liturgy, the Office of Readings and additional theological studies.

Ministry and ordination helped me focus on praying not merely for myself but to understand praying with and for others while developing a deeper personal relationship with God.

Prayer always reflects the world around me. I am humbled when people ask me to pray for them or someone in need, even more humbled when I learn others are praying for me and with me. This reflection has strongly reminded me of the value of prayer but also of its ebbs and flows in my life and how it and I have been transformed. Never give up this essential ministry, especially as we pray for our new Pope Francis. May we heed his call to humility and service to all God’s people.
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Norbertines in formation gather for nightly dinner at Holy Spirit House of Studies in Chicago.
Church leaders will proudly announce that thousands of persons become Catholics at Easter and, of course, that is a joyful fact. But little is said publicly about the steady drain of those who drift away from the Church. This is a difficult reality, painfully known by parents and grandparents who see that their kids rarely attend Mass or seem disconnected from "organized religion." As a college teacher of religion, I am faced with this drift away. There are still a core of solid Catholics and mainline Christians in my classes, but there are more and more students who say, "Well, I was raised Catholic, but..." There are more who have been raised in religiously neutral households, more still who have little or no experience of "Church."

This changing demographic does not cause me to panic. The folks I encounter are almost always good human beings with positive values. I don’t criticize them, but I do have questions for them: What in the Church puts me off? God? When I say “God,” what do I mean—especially if I reject “God,” what is it that I reject? What is it that I do believe in?—"believe" as "give my heart to." If not in God, where do I find meaning, truth, beauty?

As persons who care for others, parents, grandparents, pastors and teachers, we will not win our children over by nagging or any kind of coercion. What we can do is love them, pray for them, and show them in our lives the joy of believing.

I am encouraged by something that the Jewish philosopher Simone Weil wrote, “It seemed to me certain, and I still think so today, that one can never wrestle enough with God if one does so out of pure regard for the truth. Christ likes us to prefer truth to him because, before being Christ, he is truth. If one turns aside from him to go toward the truth, one will not go far before falling into his arms.”

If those we love are struggling with Truth, they will find Christ, and all shall be well.
Muestran Su Alegría de Creer

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

Líderes de la Iglesia anuncian orgullosamente que miles de personas se hacen Católicos en la Pascua de Resurrección, y por supuesto, esto es motivo de gran alegría. Pero poco se dice públicamente sobre aquellos que se van alejando de la Iglesia. Lo cual es una realidad difícil y dolorosa para los padres y abuelos quienes miran que sus hijos raramente asisten a Misa o parecen estar desconectados de “la religión organizada.” Como profesor de religión a nivel universitario, me confronta ese éxodo. Todavía hay un núcleo de Católicos y otros Cristianos sólidos en mis clases, pero son más los estudiantes que dicen, “Bueno, crecí siendo Católico, pero...” Y aún son muchos más los estudiantes que han sido criados o han crecido en hogares neutrales, y muchos, muchos más son los que tienen poca o ninguna experiencia de “Iglesia.”

Este demográfico cambiante no me causa pánico. La gente que encuentro casi siempre son buenos seres humanos y con valores positivos. No los juzgo, pero sí tengo preguntas para ellos: ¿Qué cosa o cosas de la Iglesia no me atraen o me molestan? ¿Dios? Cuando digo “Dios,” ¿qué es lo que quiero decir? —especialmente si rechazo a “Dios,” ¿qué es lo que estoy rechazando? ¿Qué es lo que sí creo?... y cuando digo “creer” estoy hablando de “en qué pongo mi corazón”... si no en Dios, entonces ¿dónde encuentro significado, verdad y belleza?

Como personas que cuidamos a otros, padres, abuelos, pastores y maestros, no vamos a atraer o a conquistar a nuestros hijos por medio de regaños u otro tipo de coerción. Lo que podemos hacer es amarlos, rezar por ellos, y demostrarles con nuestra vida la alegría de creer.

Me anima algo que escribió la filósofa judía Simone Weil, “Me parecía cierto, y hasta hoy pienso que es así—No hay nada mal luchar—hasta discutir—con Dios, siempre y cuando se lo hace en búsqueda de la verdad. A Cristo le gusta que optemos por la verdad antes que por Él ... porque antes de ser Cristo, Él es la verdad. Si alguien se aparta de Él para ir en pos de la verdad, esta persona no irá muy lejos antes de caer en los brazos de Él, de Cristo.”

Si las personas a quienes amamos están esforzándose en búsqueda de la Verdad, ellos encontrarán a Cristo, y todo estará bien.
Earlier this year, the Canonry (community) of St. Norbert Abbey transitioned from one prior to another when Abbot Gary Neville, O. Praem., appointed Fr. James Baraniak, O. Praem. Fr. Baraniak officially inherited the post from Fr. James Herring, O. Praem., who occupied the position for almost eight years. For Fr. Baraniak, becoming Prior is “a whole new level of ministry—a whole new direction for me.”

The role of Prior is that of a religious superior and vicar (representative) of both the Abbot and the community. Fr. Baraniak reflected that, several months ago, he was invited into the Abbot’s office to discuss this very duty. During the course of their in-depth meeting, Fr. Baraniak realized the Abbot was asking him to embrace the responsibility. “Abbot Gary was totally affirming. It was a very good meeting, a very kind meeting,” he said.

Effective March 19, the Feast of St. Joseph, Fr. Baraniak became Prior in addition to his chaplaincy with the Green Bay Packers, with whom he has worked since 1997, and his time spent as a sacramental minister at the Green Bay Correctional Institution, where he has served since 1999. Fr. Baraniak explained, “I’m both excited and fearful. Excited to build upon the great resources that the Norbertines celebrate in their membership and apostolic endeavors, and fearful that this position changes my relationship with the membership. I hope that I will be able to respond effectively and affectionately toward my confreres.”

A self-proclaimed “extraordinary extrovert and an extraordinarily optimistic person,” Fr. Baraniak thinks he and the Abbot will make a great team, as Fr. Baraniak admits to being rather energetic, and the Abbot is good at slowing him down, inviting him to see the bigger picture. This is the actual role of the Prior, whose primary mission is to carry out the Abbot’s vision for the Norbertine Community. One of Fr. Baraniak’s objectives is to discern how passion, enthusiasm, energy and excitement can continue to be instilled into the entire community.

According to Fr. Baraniak, the ministry of Prior is primarily a ministry of presence. “I will be present to these men, the men who taught me how to be a priest and how to be a religious. Some of my best friends are Norbertines. They are father figures and brothers to me.”

To learn more about the new prior, visit www.norbertines.org.
Growing in Jesus:

However it’s done, prayer is the foundation of mission

By Fr. Tim Shillcox, O. Praem.

In the Gospels, a pattern emerges in Jesus’ life—a back-and-forth between the busyness of teaching, healing, and diving into the crowd, contrasted by moments of prayerful solitude. Just like anybody at the end of work, He’s always slipping away—across the lake, to the mountains or desert, the Garden of Olives or Gethsemane—somewhere he can be in communion with God, even throughout the night.

To be faithful to Jesus, we have to cultivate this lifelong pattern. The Rule of St Benedict describes ora et labora—“prayer and work.” The Rule of Saint Augustine, which we Norbertines follow, prescribes “common life and ministry,” or contemplation and action. It’s really about elusive balance, cultivated in formation at Holy Spirit House of Studies (see page 8), and re-learned over and over again.

Notice that prayer—praise, thanksgiving, petition or confession—comes first. Prayer, worship, and contemplation prepare us to be productive in work, ministry, and action! Without them we fail.

A Norbertine parish priest for 22 years, I re-learn this lesson. When my life is out of balance, even for the best ministerial reasons, if I’m too busy to pray, I’m too busy.

In his last testament, Joseph Cardinal Bernardin shared how young priests set him straight. “If you’re serious about getting closer to Jesus, you have to spend one hour every day with Him in prayer.” This holy hour practice has produced many beautiful Christians—priests too! Challenging at first, it soon becomes a hunger, and anybody can do it.

While at Holy Cross, Bay Settlement, parishioner Dawn Weyenberg reminded me, “If you’re going to pray, why worry? If you’re going to worry, why pray?” One or the other, not both. Prayer lets us put it in God’s hands with trust.

When elders at Our Lady of Lourdes, De Pere, tell me they feel bad because they are not able to do as much for the parish anymore, I ask them to pray for our parish family, for vocations, and for their pastor. These days, we’re praying fervently for our founding pastor, Father Conrad Kratz O. Praem., after his stroke.

One couple, Sylvia and Dick Corbeill, told me 10 years ago that together, they pray for me every morning. What beautiful marital intimacy—praying together. “So that’s what has kept me going!” I said, meaning it.

When 92-year-old Grace Landweher was dying, I brought the Sacraments to her and her family. She was so ready to see her Savior face-to-face. I asked her to put in a good word for her pastor with God. “What if I go the other way?” she asked with a smile. I told her she could leave my name out of it in that case. Prayer gets us ready to face death, to face God.

“I know God is here, renewing my strength.”

View of Morgan Lake, submitted by Abbot Gary Neville, O. Praem.

As we get older, prayer forms may change. Devotions may or may not be engaging. Scripture may become central. Lists of loved ones’ needs may bring focus. A confession penance, asking folks to count their blessings, always brings a smile.

Personally, less words and more quiet seem to be the trend. Sitting before the Blessed Sacrament, even falling asleep, is powerfully healing. So is contemplating a piece of Scripture or music or art, like Van Gogh’s “Starry Night.” Using a camera to see nature’s works as praise. Even writing this article, up north at Morgan Lake as snow falls, having celebrated Mass alone, at the kitchen table, I know God is here, renewing my strength.

However it’s done, prayer is the foundation of mission; it fit Jesus for ministry, for life, even death. It does the same for us.
Fr. Stephen Rossey, O. Praem., recently authored a series of booklets entitled, “Stained Glass at the Abbey,” featuring all 68 stained glass windows. Included with each window image are a corresponding Scripture passage, a symbol description, reflection questions and a prayer. The booklets can be used for self-directed retreats scheduled through the Norbertine Center for Spirituality. Two morning Abbey window retreats for groups are offered on June 20 and September 18.

According to Fr. Stephen Rossey, O. Praem., a symbol is a visual image that conveys a deeper meaning than the image itself. The Church has used symbols since the beginning of Christianity. The famed stained glass windows of St. Norbert Abbey contain multiple layers of symbolic images. It is these representations that provide the foundation for their contemplative, reflective, and prayerful nature.

The Abbey Church windows, installed between 1959 and 1965, were designed by Francis Deck of the Emil Frei Studios in St. Louis, MO., and have as their main themes the Liturgy of the Hours, the Mass, the Sacraments, the Doctors of the Church, the Evangelists, Mary and the Blessed Sacrament. “Fr. Joseph Dorff, O. Praem., a real renaissance scholar of the [Norbertine] Order and an important man in the selection of the Frei Studio for the creation of the windows, once said that they contain enough information for a lifetime of meditation,” said Fr. Rossey.

For Fr. Rossey, the most inspiring aspect about these visual masterpieces is how the designer has, in imitation of the early Church fathers, “taken objects of everyday experience and given them religious meaning or interpretation. By understanding the context of each window and seeing this translated into symbol, I believe the visual symbol
stays with me longer than the esoteric theology that forms its underpinning,” he said.

While the windows are on display for the public who attends Mass in the Abbey Church to enjoy, Fr. Rossey explained that they were originally created for a religious community (and not for a parish), that has to be in Church several times each day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. “Traditional subject matter, (e.g. the Saints), would soon be exhausted and quickly become boring,” he said. “Symbolic rendering of subject matter is open to many avenues of interpretation and hence always fresh and new.”

The bookshelves of Fr. Conrad Kratz, O. Praem., are piled high with baskets and boxes filled with hundreds of uplifting and prayerful cards and notes – enough to populate a tall tree with paper leaves. Since suffering a serious stroke in June 2011, Fr. Kratz has had to persevere through difficult rehabilitation, including a time when he could not speak clearly. “I kept my humor about the whole thing,” he said, smiling.

Fr. Kratz, director emeritus of the Norbertine Center for Spirituality, is also the founding pastor of the Norbertine parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in De Pere, formed when St. Joseph Church merged with St. Boniface Church in the mid-90s. The parish has its own long-standing prayer tree that begins with a single phone call. A prayer request is disseminated to other pray-ers, who pass the request on to more people on the tree. Prayers can be requested anonymously.

Rosemary Rankin attends Our Lady of Lourdes, and is among a group of people involved with its 70-member prayer tree. “We get some very serious prayer requests concerning health issues, employment, about someone who’s in the service. It runs the gamut,” she said.

Fr. Kratz is someone who is remembered on the prayer tree by name. Rankin explained that Fr. Kratz is such a vibrant part of the history of Our Lady of Lourdes, people are drawn to him. “He’s very much appreciated and greatly loved. He’s a special man. He’s a wonderful priest.”

Fr. Kratz is used to telling people he will keep them in prayer and remember them at Mass. It was not until he was on the receiving end of things that he realized he, too, could benefit from the prayer of others. For those unable to pray for themselves, it is a great comfort to know that others are doing so. “How beautiful to receive as well as give,” he said.

Fr. Kratz explained that God’s grace, presence and spirit are evident in prayer. “Sometimes I tell God, ‘You know, this isn’t fun anymore.’ But then He tells me, ‘You’re doing all right, Conrad; you’re doing all right.’”

Add your own beautiful branch to a tree! Consider joining or forming a prayer tree at your parish. Your prayer for others is a testament to your belief in God’s ability to heal and a generous show of support for others in need of prayer and encouragement.

Center Yourself
Led by Sr. Judy Miller, CSJ, and the Rev. Lee Goodwin, Deepening the Spiritual Life is a nine-month program through the Norbertine Center for Spirituality for men and women of any religious tradition who are seeking to nourish their spiritual lives. The program is intended for those who desire to make a significant commitment of time and attention to spiritual growth. For more information, visit www.norbertines.org.
“I guess I’m not as much of a loner as I thought I was.”

Patrick La Pacz, 26, found his way to Holy Spirit House of Studies through a somewhat circuitous route. After earning his bachelor’s degree in history at St. Norbert College, he started to pursue the priesthood though the diocesan formation process. “I realized I was less of a loner than I thought I was,” he explained, referring to his eventual decision to instead join the Norbertine community. With much of his theology coursework already completed, Patrick is now a first-year novice in Chicago. This “hermitage period” restricts his access to his family of origin, television, Facebook and unnecessary outings or travel while he learns about the history and mission of the Norbertine order.

His peer, Frater Michael Brennan, is a second-year novice at the Abbey in De Pere and teaches at Notre Dame Academy in Green Bay.

Young men in formation for the Norbertine priesthood

By Gina Sanders Larsen

One of the special treasures of our Catholic faith is that God so understood the human condition that He sent His only Son to live, suffer and die with us. Jesus was part of a family, He had an earthly trade, He felt pain, joy, and interpersonal strife. He knew He was put on earth to do big things.

I recently met four men who understand that they, too, were put on earth to do big things in the name of God. They are in formation for the priesthood at the Norbertine Holy Spirit House of Studies in Chicago, led by Fr. David Komatz, O. Praem. They opened their home to me, an inquisitive writer, and Jerry Turba, an assiduous professional photographer, to learn about their journeys and dreams. Each man told a unique story of acceptance of his calling and hope for a fulfilling religious and professional life. As you meet them, I hope you feel camaraderie, offer prayers of support, share their stories with those you love, and open your hearts to possibility.

By Gina Sanders Larsen

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HiStory, Patrick is a first-year novice
Home Parish: St. Agnes in Green Bay
Education: Holy Family School, Notre Dame Academy, St. Norbert College (history)
Family: Youngest of three, father works in the finance department at a paper mill, mother has been both a homemaker and worked in insurance
Hobbies & Interests: History and football, especially related to the Green Bay Packers
Brad Vanden Branden, 26, is a gifted musician and cantor with an undergraduate degree in music education, yet he was just a second-grader at Our Lady of Lourdes day school in De Pere when he decided to become a priest. “I remember playing kickball on the playground with Fr. Jim (Baraniak, O. Praem.) in grade school, and he was running around the bases in his flowing white Norbertine habit, the little kids always pulling on his sash. I always saw priests as part of my community, as a possibility,” Brad said, “and my becoming a priest became normative in my family, from very early on.” While earning his undergraduate degree, Brad was part of a distinctive group of five friends in his dorm who all entered religious life upon graduation.

“I have a passion for sacred music. I’d love to teach at St. Norbert College someday. But the organ at the Abbey still scares me to death!”

“I would be very happy with a post in a parish.”

Jake Sircy, 26, grew up in Minoqua and readily admits he was not much of a Church-goer in his youth. Things changed when he enrolled at St. Norbert College after high school. “I met with Fr. Jim (Baraniak, O. Praem., pastor of Old St. Joe’s campus parish) right away, and he asked me point blank, ‘Can you see yourself as a priest?’” That started a five-year discernment process where Jake met with Fr. Jim frequently and talked about his vocation with family and friends. After graduating with a degree in religious studies and youth ministry, he joined the Green Bay-based Norbertine Volunteer Community for a year of service.

“I can even remember where I was in December 2009 on the sidewalk between the volunteer house and Church, when I knew I would become a priest. It was like someone said it. I heard someone tell me, ‘This is what you should do,’” Jake said, smiling shyly.

HiStory, Third-year theologian
Currently: Attends CTU working toward masters’ degrees in both divinity and liturgy
Home Parish: Our Lady of Lourdes in De Pere
Education: Our Lady of Lourdes, Notre Dame Academy, St. Norbert College (music education)
Family: One younger sister, father works at a paper mill, mother owns a hair salon
Hobbies & Interests: Sacred music. “I miss singing. I want to put together a recital.”
Funny: “When I was a kid, I didn’t put my laundry away and my father threatened not to let me go to Church if I didn’t finish my chores. I finished them, because I didn’t want to miss Mass.”

Interesting: Jake’s mother was Presbyterian and converted to Catholicism when Jake joined the Norbertine Order.
Hobbies & Interests: Reading C.S. Lewis, J.K. Rowling and J.R.R. Tolkien
"I was drawn into the debate … We’d get mad at each other. We’d fight."

Matt Dougherty, 26, remembers his first days as a freshman at St. Norbert College in 2005. “My dorm room was next door to a couple of guys who were passionately Catholic. It was so strange to walk in and see statues of Mary and pictures of saints up on the wall,” Matt said. Together, the group would play basketball, form an intramural football team, and discuss theological books. “They were outgoing and eccentric and I was drawn into the debate over the value and meaning behind their Catholic faith,” Matt remembers. Today he readily admits, “My conversion experience happened in community, in that dorm setting, and I liked that feeling of fellowship and brotherhood. The grace of God brought me back to faith, and my friends were the mediators.” By the end of his first semester, Matthew was regularly visiting with Fr. Jim Baraniak, O. Praem., whose pastoral office happened to be located in the science building on campus. (Matt’s major was organismal biology.) Long hours of prayer, contemplation, and discernment led to a pinnacle moment at Mass at his home parish, St. William in Waukesha, WI. “I was home for the weekend, they were singing Ave Maria, and as I took communion, I lost it. I just cried. I was actually frightened by the emotion I felt.” Matt knows the answer came to him at that moment, and he knew he was to become a priest.

**HiStory, Fourth-year theologian**

**Currently:** Attends CTU working toward masters’ degrees in both divinity and systemic theology. He also volunteers with the Faith and Fellowship program based out of St. Catherine and St. Lucie Parishes in Chicago, a program that seeks to engage people with severe mental illness in ecumenical prayer, worship and fellowship experiences.

**Home Parish:** St. William, Waukesha, Wisconsin

**Education:** St. William Elementary School, St. Joseph Middle School, Waukesha North High School, St. Norbert College

**Family:** One of four children, has an identical twin brother Patrick and another brother and sister; father works in health care communications and is a St. Norbert College alum; mother is both a homemaker and a secretary

**Career Path:** Matt hopes to earn his Ph.D. in biology that will prepare him for a college teaching position.

**Academics and Holy Orders Together Form Norbertine Priests**

1. Earn a bachelor’s degree in one’s chosen major, then:
2. First-Year Novitiate—A year of separation from the outside world as one prays, lives in community, and studies. All education is inside the Order; that is, Norbertines sharing the Order’s doctrine and direction with the novice.
3. Second-Year Novitiate, or the Apostolic Year—A year of study, service and community living typically at the Norbertine Abbey in De Pere, WI. Second-year novices spend their time in teaching or ministry positions within GRACE, the Green Bay Area Catholic Education system, Notre Dame Academy (high school), St. Norbert College, a Norbertine parish or the wider community.
4. Men take Simple Vows after two years as novices.
5. Third- through Sixth-Year Theologians—As theologians, the men return to Holy Spirit House of Studies in Chicago to enroll in degree coursework at CTU. Fourth-year students also accept a rigorous volunteer service practicum. The result of three to four years of study is a required master’s in divinity (M.Div.), and an optional second master’s degree in theology.
6. After three years of Simple Vows, the men take Solemn Vows. They are then eligible to be ordained as deacons, a position that may last six to twelve months. After their diaconate, they are prepared to be ordained as priests.

**What’s In a Name?**

Within the Norbertines, a man is a Frater, meaning a candidate for the priesthood, until he is ordained a deacon, when he becomes Reverend Frater. Upon ordination, he is addressed as Father or Reverend Father. Norbertines not pursuing priestly orders are called Brothers.

**Helpful Links:**

Norbertines [www.norbertines.org](http://www.norbertines.org)
Catholic Theological Union (CTU) [www.ctu.edu](http://www.ctu.edu)
Faith & Fellowship as featured on PBS
Norbertine Vocation Coordinator
vocations@norbertines.org
(920) 403-3075

Fraters share an evening meal they prepared together.
highlighting various faith traditions. As Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI shared, “Dialogue between religions nourishes the surrounding culture in the present day; both the participants and society are enriched.”

Dr. Tom Bolin, professor of Religious Studies at St. Norbert College, is a wonder at unpacking stories of the Old Testament (September 19 and 26). One recent participant offered, “I’ve never really ‘gotten’ Old Testament stories, but Dr. Bolin is wonderful at setting the historical stage, and sharing thoughts in understandable, relevant, and engaging ways. I will be back for anything he offers!”

The Center for Spirituality is deeply committed to issues regarding social justice. A panel featuring Frs. James Baraniak, O. Praem., Rod Fenzl, O. Praem., and Brian Prunty, O. Praem., focuses on prison ministry (October 24). In addition, Tony Pichler, Director of the Board of Trustees of St. John’s Homeless Shelter, is facilitating a panel discussion about homelessness on November 19.

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

Realizing summer is often a time for reading and relaxation, June, July and August offerings include a soul-inspiring book-sharing morning, days of prayer and reflection, book discussions and directed retreats. Fr. Tim Shilleox, O. Praem., with a potter’s wheel in hand, facilitates an inspirational week-long retreat entitled Pottery and the Word of God, (June 23-28), focusing on the timeless and relevant Word of Scripture.

The pace picks up in fall, which is filled with compelling programs. The popular We Believe: The Many Faces of Faith series (September 10, October 8 and November 5) continues, Needless to say, the gracious note below made our day. We strive to offer spiritually diverse programs, knowing we all are in different stages of our faith journeys and our life experiences vary from person to person. And Kelly is right, the Center is most fortunate to be located within St. Norbert Abbey and the beautiful, sacred ground on which it stands. If you haven’t been to the Center, we certainly hope you’ll attend one of the programs or retreats soon. As a regular participant shared, “I find my inspiration here.”

“Thank you so much for all the spectacular and informative offerings at the Spirituality Center. The variety of topics and speakers is incredible. I feel truly blessed to be able to have such easy access to the beauty and tranquility of the Abbey PLUS the inspiration and knowledge provided by you and your staff through the speakers you bring together year after year.”

Kelly Krummel
Active Participant at the Center
News, Honors and Distinctions

This year, St Norbert College has renamed its Diversity Leadership Award in honor of FR. KENNETH DE GROOT, O. PRAEM. The award (now called the Fr. Ken De Groot Multicultural Leadership Award) is given to those students who have been admitted to the college and have committed themselves to service to others and working for social justice throughout their high school careers.

FR. JAMES HERRING, O. PRAEM., JCD, is now Associate Formation Director and Master of Simple Professed (Seminarians) at the Norbertine Order's Holy Spirit House of Studies in Chicago.

A dedicated volunteer at the Bay Area Humane Society, BR. TERRENCE LAUERMAN, O. PRAEM., has been recognized by a local newspaper for having devoted more than 734 hours of his time last year to helping care for homeless cats at the shelter. Also last year, in November 2012, he attended a conference in Portugal concerning the Portuguese Norbertine abbey of Ermida do Paiva.

FR. ALFRED McBRIDE, O. PRAEM., has published his 50th book, Holding Jesus: Reflections on Mary the Mother of God, which offers 42 reflections, each with Scripture to ponder, an inspirational quote, a brief meditation, a question for reflection and a prayer.

In March, FRATER MICHAEL BRENNAN, O. PRAEM., pledged to shave his head in honor of St. Baldrick's Day, an event to benefit the St. Baldrick’s Foundation in support of childhood cancer research. He raised nearly $2,000 for the cause.

FR. JEREMY TOBIN, O. PRAEM., attended the Priest-Labor Initiative in Reno, NV, in April. The initiative, begun by the National Federation of Priests’ Councils and founded on the principles of Catholic social teaching, seeks to place priests beside workers, especially those facing unfair wages, hours and working conditions. Fr. Tobin resides at the Norbertine Priory of St. Moses the Black in Raymond, Mississippi. He is a member of the NAACP, ACLU, and a co-founder of the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance.

The Norbertine Volunteer Community (NVC) welcomes Emily Groves, a graduate of Carroll University, who is currently volunteering as the coordinator of the Bellin Expressive Arts in Medicine program at the Bellin Cancer Team site.

Norbertine Volunteer Community

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VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

The Norbertine Volunteer Community (NVC) provides young adults with the opportunity to serve the most vulnerable in our local community, and develop and utilize professional skills. They focus on exploring issues of social and environmental justice, creating community among the other volunteers and seriously delving into faith-building experiences through the lens of Norbertine charisms and Roman Catholic tradition.

NVC members are post-college age men and women (typically 21 – 29 years old) who seek a year of service, while discerning a vocational focus or graduate school options.

If you would like to learn more about this full-time service opportunity and outreach program of the Norbertine priests and brothers of St. Norbert Abbey, contact Ellen Mommaerts at (902) 403-2944, or via e-mail at ellen.mommaerts@snc.edu.
FR. THOMAS MEULEMANS, O. PRAEM., of Daylesford Abbey in Paoli, PA, passed into God’s eternal kingdom on December 4, 2012.

Fr. Meulemans was born on May 5, 1934. After graduating from St. Norbert High in 1951 and one year at the college, he joined the Order in 1952. He was solemnly professed in 1957 and ordained to the presbyterate in 1959. Fr. Meulemans received his B.A. in Philosophy from St. Norbert College in 1956. In 1962 he received an M.A. in Communication Arts from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He fostered a long and successful career in public speaking and education, which included working as a writer and broadcaster for the WBAY Radio Mass from the National Shrine at St. Norbert College and Abbey, as well as teaching religion, speech, forensics and debate. He taught at Abbot Pennings High School (where he also served as principal for several years), Bishop Neumann High in Philadelphia and Archmere Academy in Claymont, DE.

Fr. Meulemans later undertook post-graduate studies in educational administration at the University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh and at Columbia University Teacher’s College. For many years, he was also Mission Procurator for the Norbertine mission in Peru, and frequently traveled for preaching assignments to parishes across the nation.

FR. THOMAS HAGENDORF, O. PRAEM., passed into God’s eternal kingdom on May 18, 2013.

Fr. Hagendorf was born on May 20, 1937, in South Philadelphia. In 1955, he graduated from Southeast Catholic High School in Philadelphia. In 1960 he received a B.A. in philosophy from St. Norbert College and an M.A. in library science from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1965.

On August 28, 1955, Fr. Hagendorf entered the Norbertine Novitiate of Daylesford Priory in Paoli, PA, where he was vested as a novice. He professed Simple Vows on August 28, 1957, and professed Solemn Vows on August 28, 1960. He was ordained to the priesthood on August 29, 1963, and was planning on celebrating his Golden Jubilee on June 6, 2013.

He was the librarian and a member of the theology department at Archmere Academy in Claymont, DE, from 1964 until 1988, where he also served as the Superior of Immaculate Conception Priory.

While in Berkeley, CA, on sabbatical, in 1989, he served as associate pastor at Our Lady of Angels Church in Burlingame, CA, and then as pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace in Baltimore, MD.

In 2000, Fr. Hagendorf moved back to St. Norbert Abbey, where he functioned as associate pastor of St. Jude/Annunciation Parishes in Green Bay and Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in De Pere. In 2003, he was appointed pastor of Holy Cross Parish (Bay Settlement), Green Bay.

BR. ROBERT CRAANEN, O. PRAEM., answered God’s call to come home on February 23, 2013, after a long and courageous battle with multiple sclerosis.


Br. Craanen served on the faculty at Prémontré High School. He was Key Club Moderator at Prémontré and was the Assistant Administrator of the Wisconsin–Upper Michigan District Key Club International and a member and past President of the Southwest Green Bay–Ashwaubenon Kiwanis Club. Br. Craanen was awarded the prestigious George Hixon Award of Achievement for Kiwanis International in 1998 and in 1999. Br. Craanen was also a long-time volunteer at the Salvation Army. His passion was community service and helping others.
2013 Spring/Summer Calendar for St. Norbert Abbey

MAY
23 – An Evening in the Abbey Gardens, 6:30—8 p.m.
30 – Catholic Charities is “Working to Reduce Poverty in America” (Br. Steve Herro), 6:30—8 p.m.

JUNE
16 – Taizé Prayer, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
20 – Praying the Abbey Windows Morning Retreat (Fr. Stephen Rossey), 9—11:30 a.m.
23–28 – Pottery and the Word of God: Summer Retreat (Fr. Tim Shillcox), Sunday 4 p.m.—Friday lunch

JULY
2 – Day of Prayer and Reflection (Sr. Judy Miller), 9 a.m.—5 p.m.
11, 18, 25 – Scripture in the Garden: God’s Way of Seeking Us (Pat De Groot), 10—11:30 a.m.
21 – Taizé Prayer, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
24, 31 – Book Discussion: Falling Upward (Kathie Tilot, Judy Turba), 10—11:30 a.m.

AUGUST
1 – Scripture in the Garden: God’s Way of Seeking Us (Pat De Groot), 10—11:30 a.m.
13 – Day of Prayer and Reflection (Sr. Judy Miller), 9 a.m.—5 p.m.
18 – Taizé Prayer, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.

SEPTEMBER
5 – Heaven: Is It for Real? (Fr. John Tourangeau), 6:30—8 p.m.
6–8 – Deepening the Spiritual Life (Rev. Lee Goodwin, Sr. Judy Miller), Friday 4 p.m.—Sunday 9:45 a.m.
10 – We Believe: The Many Faces of Faith Series (Michael Matharani), 6:30—8 p.m.
15 – The Elements of Taizé-style Prayer, followed by Taizé service (Dr. Michael Frisch), 6:15—8 p.m.
18 – Praying the Abbey Windows Morning Retreat (Fr. Stephen Rossey), 9—11:30 a.m.
19, 26 – Old Testament Series (Dr. Tom Bolin), 6:30—8 p.m.
24 – Tips for Teachers of the Faith (Fr. Al McBride), 6:30—8 p.m.
26 – Coffee and Conversation with Fr. Conrad Kratz, 10—11 a.m.

OCTOBER
3 – Of Vice and Men: Redeeming the Three-hour Tour (Fr. Jim Baraniak), 6:30—8 p.m.
8 – We Believe: The Many Faces of Faith Series (Rita and Robert Olsen), 6:30—8 p.m.
10 – Abbey Lecture Series: Paths to New Life—What Living Well Asks of Us (Dr. Paul Wadell), 6:30—8 p.m.
17 – Is Spiritual Direction for You? (Rev. Lee Goodwin, Sr. Judy Miller), 10—11:30 a.m. or 6:30—8 p.m.
18–20 – Mindfulness in Daily Life Retreat (Rev. Lee Goodwin), Friday 7 p.m.—Sunday 3 p.m.
19 – Canon John Bruce Organ Concert Series (Jean-Baptiste Robin), Abbey Church, 2 p.m.
20 – Taizé Prayer, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
24 – A Norbertine Perspective on Crime & Criminal Justice (Fr. Jim Baraniak, Fr. Rod Fenzl, Fr. Brian Prunty), 6:30—8 p.m.
29 – A Worthy Call: Exploring the Search for Vocation (Julie Massey, Rebecca Welsh), 6:30—8 p.m.

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