Serving the Menominee People

Eloquent Cultural Expressions of Faith

Living the Francis Effect

Serving the Menominee People

Eloquent Cultural Expressions of Faith
In the late 1950s, Pope John XXIII opened the windows of the Church to allow in some fresh air—he was concerned with the condition and modernization (aggiornamento) of the Church after 20 centuries of life. Today we hear the expression the “Francis Effect.” Our new pope is challenging the Church and the whole world to look around and see things differently. While John sought change within the very theological structures of the Church, Pope Francis seeks a pause, a reflection about how we are and do Church.

Pope Francis has issued any number of challenges to the Church in his first year in the papal office. He has spoken very much as a father, as a teacher, using the simple ordinary “magisterium” to challenge his flock.

Our new pope has made a number of statements which dovetail so well with our Norbertine Constitutions. Pope Francis spoke recently of how the Church injures itself. He spoke specifically of hypocrisy, “stressing that inconsistency between what pastors and Christians preach and what they practice is undermining the Catholic Church’s credibility."

Peter and the Apostles proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus courageously and fearlessly, but “are we capable of bringing the Word of God into the environment in which we live?” asked the pope. “Let us all remember this: one cannot proclaim the Gospel of Jesus without the tangible witness of one’s life. Those who listen to us and observe us must be able to see in our actions what they hear from our lips, and so give glory to God!”

The pontiff, referencing the beloved St. Francis of Assisi, shared one of the quotations of the thirteenth century Italian friar: “Preach the Gospel and, if necessary, use words.” He continued: “Preach with your life, with your witness.” Both the pope and our constitutions have some challenging but hopeful things to say to us!

Whenever we are sent to assist or establish another church, we ought to be solicitous that, in accord with the constitutions of our order, we “take care to regard the people of that locality as neighbors without distinguishing persons or social status, and to share on our part the pastoral office of the bishop and his priests.”

The pope does not want us to “simply remain in our own secure world, that of the ninety-nine sheep who never strayed from the fold, but we should go out, with Christ, in search of the one lost sheep, however far it may have wandered.” Jesus teaches us another way: Go out. Go out and share your testimony, go out and interact with your brothers, go out and share, go out and ask. Become the Word in body as well as spirit. We are to build bridges and not walls. Our ministerial opportunities are endless!

G. Neville, O.P.
Fr. David McElroy, O. Praem., takes a group selfie with religious education students outside St. Michael’s in Keshena, Wisconsin, on the Menominee Indian Reservation.
Pope Francis’ First Year:
Re-centering the Church
“Rejoice with me! I have found my lost sheep!”
(Luke 15:6)

By Fr. Tim Shillcox, O. Praem.
Translated by Sister Guadalupe Muñoz

The analysis of religious historian Mircea Eliade (1907-1986) is required material in seminary. Among his insights: Most religions, primitive to modern, reflect the concept of a “center of the world” or “sacred tree.” It takes various forms—Eden’s tree, a maypole, the cross (and by extension, the altar), or bishops’ and abbots’ pastoral staffs.

Jesus demands our centeredness in the cross, to the confusion of his disciples and the resistance of believers ever since he preached, “To be my disciple, deny yourself; take up your cross each day and follow me” (Luke 9:23). The cross is the center! Around the abbey, retired Abbot Jerome Tremel reminds us, “Remember! The ‘main thing’ is to keep the ‘main thing’ the ‘main thing’!”

**Pope Francis understands.** Even before his election, he warned against a self-referential Church, one that is arrogant and self-absorbed and whose language, rites, structures, customs, politics, egos, and theological wrangling steal center stage from the Gospel. As votes were counted, Francis tells of Brazilian Cardinal Claudio Hummes’ reminder, “Don’t forget the poor.” Hence, he took the name Francis, after the poor one of Assisi.

In his 2013 Holy Thursday homily, he reminded priests that the oil of gladness, which is compassion and joy, must flow downward, outward through our ministry, reaching those on the margins, at the fringes, even over the boundaries of the Church. Otherwise we’re managers, not pastors.

Francis uses a classic shepherding, military, athletic strategy—the end run; the flank approach. The shepherd could stand in the center, waiting for the sheep to ‘flock’ to him, his staff, the center of their world. What about folks lost and wandering? Do we let them be lost? Jesus teaches, “No!” (Luke 15:3-6).

**Pope Francis understands this.** Look at his simple pectoral cross, available in Roman shops for $14.95, a mix of tin and aluminum. It portrays the Good Shepherd taking the initiative to go out and find the lost, carrying it home on his shoulders, the epitome of the Church’s mission. Pope Francis teaches us not to wait for the world to come to us; we must run out to the edges, the perimeter, and use his apostolic exhortation, The Joy of the Gospel, to “hook” the lost, like a shepherd using his crook, rescuing and bringing them home to Christ.

He washes feet in a Roman prison; he cold-calls folks; answers letters; he stops the ‘pope-mobile,’ scrambling to kiss a paralytic held by his brother; to embrace a teenager with cerebral palsy; to have a selfie taken with Italian teens. He hugs a drug addict; invites blue-collar workers to daily Mass; holds a weeping man; and stops from judging gay and lesbian persons, atheists, or Muslims.

Pope Francis has created a new “center” of the Roman Catholic world; it’s not him, or rules, or clerics, or affluent, first world countries. He places the compassionate, merciful, joyful, crucified and risen Jesus at the center, present in those at or beyond the comfortable margins. Running out to them at the edges, and requiring us to do the same, he seeks to bring us all home to Jesus, the life of our Church, and the cross/altar/table at the center of it all—the Eucharist.
El Primer Año del Papa Francisco:
Centrando la Iglesia Nuevamente
“¡Alégrense conmigo! He encontrado mis ovejas perdidas!”
(Lucas 15:6)

Por Padre Tim Shillcox, O. Praem.
Traducido por Sister Guadalupe Muñoz

El análisis del historiador religioso, Mircea Eliade (1907-1986) es materia requerida en el seminario. Según su visión: La mayoría de las religiones, desde primitivas hasta modernas, reflejan el concepto de un “centro del universo” o “árbol sagrado”. Este toma varias formas —el árbol de Edén, un árbol de mayo, la Cruz, (y por extensión, el altar) o bastones pastorales de obispos o abades.

Jesús demanda que nos centremos en la cruz, a la confusión de sus discípulos y la resistencia de creyentes desde que él predicó, “Para ser mi discípulo, niégate a ti mismo; toma tu cruz diaria y sígueme” (Lucas 9:23). ¡La cruz es el centro! Por la abadía, el abad jubilado Jerome Tremel nos recuerda, “¡Acuérdense! ¡Lo más importante es mantener ‘lo más importante’ como ‘lo más importante’!” El Papa Francisco tiene entendido.

Aún antes de su elección, ya advertía contra una Iglesia enfocada en sí misma, arrogante, ego-céntrica y cuyo lenguaje, ritos, estructuras, costumbres, políticas, egos y peleas teológicas roban el escenario central del evangelio. Mientras se contaban los votos, Francisco cuenta del recordatorio del Cardinal brasileño Claudio Hummes, “No se olvide de los pobres.” Por eso, él tomó el nombre Francisco, recordando al pobre de Asís.

En su homilía del Jueves Santo 2013, nos recordó que el aceite de regocijo, que es compasión y alegría, debe posar en nosotros y derramarse en nuestro ministerio, alcanzando a los marginados, en las orillas, aún más allá de las fronteras de la Iglesia. De otra manera somos administradores, no pastores.

Francisco usa una estrategia clásica pastoral, militar y atlética —esquivando a los demás para llegar a la meta. El pastor se coloca en el centro, esperando que los corderos se congreguen alrededor de él y sus ayudantes, como centro de su mundo. ¿Pero qué tal la gente perdida y extraviada? ¿Permitimos que estén perdidos? Jesús enseña, “Que No!” (Lucas 15:3-6).

El Papa Francisco tiene entendido. Miren su cruz pectoral sencilla, disponible en tiendas Romanas por $14.95, una mezcla de estaño y aluminio, que retrata el Buen Pastor tomando la iniciativa de buscar al perdido, llevándole a casa sobre sus hombros, epitome de la misión de la Iglesia. El Papa Francisco nos enseña a no esperar que el mundo llegue a nosotros; debemos correr a los márgenes, al perímetro, y utilizar la alegría del evangelio, para ‘enganchar’ a los perdidos, como un pastor utilizando su cayado, rescatando y trayéndoles a casa para Cristo.

El lava los pies en una prisión Romana; llama a la gente por teléfono inesperadamente; contesta cartas, hace parar el ‘papa-móvil’, apresurándose para besar a un paralítico, sostenido por su hermano; para abrazar a un adolescente con parálisis o para ser fotografiado con/por adolescentes italianos. El abraza a un drogadicto; invita a trabajadores sencillos a misa diaria; abraza a un hombre que llora, y no juzga a los homosexuales y lesbianas, ateos o musulmanes.

El Papa Francisco ha creado un nuevo ‘centro’ del mundo Romano Católico; no es él, ni reglas, ni ciérgos ni países afluents del primer mundo. Él pone al centro al Jesús compasivo, misericordioso, alegre, crucificado — presente en los que estén en o más allá de los márgenes de comodidad. Corriendo hacia ellos a las orillas, y exigiéndonos a hacer lo mismo, el busca traernos a todos a casa con Jesús, la vida de nuestra Iglesia, y a la cruz/altar/mesa al centro de todo —la Eucaristía.
Pope Francis has called on the world’s priests to bring the healing power of God’s grace to everyone in need, to stay close to the marginalized and to be “shepherds living with the smell of the sheep.” Meet FR. DAVID MCELROY, O. PRAEM., who skips up the altar steps as he slips past a majestic carved eagle ambo and into the sacristy looking for matches. We are at St. Anthony’s in Neopit, Wisconsin, on the Menominee Indian Reservation, and he’s eager to show his visitors an intricately beaded stole that features the traditional woodland flowers of the Menominee.

Touching the stole to his lips, he glides it over his head and around the back of his neck, reaching for the matches that will light the fragrant cedar greens and dried sage in the sanctuary. Smoldering in an upturned turtle shell, the smudging ceremony’s fragrant smoke brings to mind another tradition, that of ceremonial incense. Father Mack, as his congregation knows him, takes up an eagle feather and instructs each of us how to waft the smoke three times—twice to ourselves, and once up and beyond, to purify body, mind, and spirit.

“Let the church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven.” — Pope Francis
Father Mack is in his fourth year on the Menominee reservation, and his second year serving as the administrator to St. Michael’s in Keshena, St. Anthony’s in Neopit, and St. Francis Solanus in Gresham. The latter has members from the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans. Bishop David Ricken of Green Bay appealed to the Norbertine priests of De Pere to fill this remote post when diocesan priest Fr. Dave Barrett retired in 2009 after serving at Keshena for 29 years, and diocesan Fr. David Kiefer died in May 2011 after two decades as pastor in Neopit.

Little did Bishop Ricken know that a Norbertine Irishman, born and raised in Dublin, would be so well received in Menominee country. “The women bring me chili and fry bread,” Father Mack says in his endearing Irish lilt and crooked smile. “They worry about me because I am so far from home.”

That outsider mentality makes the complex priest-and-parishioner relationship work for Father Mack and the primarily Menominee people he serves. When asked about the delicate yet meaningful work he does amongst his Native American parishioners, he says he was chosen by God for this work decades before now. “Growing up in Dublin, my mother was Protestant and my father was Catholic. I know what it’s like to live in two worlds.”

For Father Mack, it’s been a diligent and fascinating journey thus far to build a sense of trust and genuine respect between the Church, himself as an individual, and the people he’s been called to serve. Father Mack also quickly appealed to his Norbertine order’s development office to fund the $35,000 purchase of a new truck for picking up food at the Feeding America warehouse in Omro and Walmart in Antigo that supply the two parishes’ food pantries with staples. Gridding poverty puts daily strain on most of the families on the reservation, and government statistics rank the reservation as one of the unhealthiest places to live in Wisconsin. Menominee County has the state’s highest rates of mortality, poverty, obesity, unemployment, teen births and violent crime.

On the day we visited Father Mack in Keshena, the St. Michael’s food pantry was preparing to distribute food to 134 families and individuals. In keeping with tribal tradition, elders would be served first, a status that is recognizable by the green tickets they hold. Others are given orange.

Menominee elders wield transformative power in parish life, Father Mack has observed. As a group, the elders attend the smaller Kateri Chapel at St. Michael’s where the Eucharist is now celebrated daily. When a Menominee elder, Guy Grignon, spoke of the existence of a complete set of original Menominee Stations of the Cross, he was able to successfully repatriate them from a private home in Milwaukee. These Stations now grace the intimate Kateri Chapel, making it a doubly sacred space. Father Mack noticed, “When the elders have somewhere to go, to meet, they talk amongst themselves. We have daily Mass in the Kateri Chapel now, and we see more occasions when the grandparents will bring their grandchildren and great grandchildren. Their presence has transformed attendance.”

Menominee craftspeople intentionally create one imperfection in their woven, beaded and stitched handiwork as a reminder of our human flaws in the midst of the one true Creator. The intricately beaded stole that Father Mack wears for the smudging ceremony includes such a flaw, noticeable only to the trained eye.
A Devoted History
The relationship between the Menominee people and the Norbertines of De Pere goes back nearly 40 years to a time when an ordained Norbertine priest named Fr. Robert Cornell, O. Praem., represented District 8 in Washington, D.C., the district that included the Menominee Reservation. From 1975 to 1979, Fr. Cornell was an influential liberal Democratic member of both education and labor committees and vocally supported the rights of Vietnam veterans, many of whom in his district were Menominee. During this era, St. Norbert College was the primary grantor of teachers’ certifications to Menominee undergraduates seeking teaching degrees.

Did You Know?
In Menominee culture and tradition, a person must remove his or her glasses to fully receive the smoke of the smudging ceremony. Similarly, persons remove their glasses to peer upon the face of a deceased person at a wake. It is believed that the spirit will become confused if a person’s face is obscured by the glass or if light is reflected from whence it came.

St. Kateri Tekawitha
is a highly esteemed saint and woman of faith among her fellow Native American women. Kateri Circles meet weekly at St. Michael’s, a sisterhood of support where women pray for each other and their families, mentor and support each other, and look after one another in times of distress. They abide by the guidelines of the Tekawitha Conference, whose mission is to support “the voice, presence and identity of Indigenous Catholics of North America.” Learn more at www.tekconf.org.

“To live charitably means not looking out for our own interests, but carrying the burdens of the weakest and poorest among us.”
— Pope Francis

St. Anthony’s members number in the thousands because Menominee from all over the world claim these parishes as home. More than 80 percent of Menominee identify themselves as Catholic.

Father Mack feels as though he is slowly gaining access to the inner lives of the Menominee people as he learns their particular style of faith and tradition. The fellowship hall at St. Michael’s is set up to accommodate traditional three-day wakes where family members keep vigil with the deceased around the clock. On our tour, he pointed out where the deceased people are placed, pausing to point out a table where infants are better situated, usually wrapped simply in blankets.

Of particular note, when a member of the Menominee tribe dies off the reservation, he or she is returned to the reservation to be buried. This is true of members who live in urban areas and any of the 50 states. Therefore, funerals at St. Michael’s and St. Anthony’s take on an extraterritorial nature, a sacred duty absorbed by the small and financially strapped parishes whenever they are called upon to honor their dead. The Menominee web site states that in 2008, the last year for which statistics are cited, just 3,927 (46.33%) of the tribe’s membership resided on the reservation.

Father Mack acknowledges the good in the two worlds he straddles—the life of the Menominee people he serves and his own Caucasian identity in which he has vested himself as a Norbertine priest. “But I see core Norbertine values working here on the reservation,” he explained. “The values of reconciliation, of Menominee and whites working side-by-side—that is very Norbertine. And the Eucharist, we have doubled our celebrations of the Mass. We are building up a community for vocations and bringing people back to church. I really do believe I was chosen for this work.”

Menominee faithful leave prayer requests, photos, candles, and mementos at a small side altar at St. Michael Parish in Keshena.

Father Mack discusses administrative duties with the secretary at St. Anthony Parish in Neopit. “Maggie does all the smart work on the computer,” he said.
Eloquent Cultural Expressions of Faith

By Fr. Stephen Rossey, O. Praem.

For more than a century in the United States the Norbertines have welcomed and embraced diverse people of God. Since the arrival of FR. BERNARD PENNINGS, O. PRAEM., from Holland to the present day, we have identified with immigrant Europeans, formed bonds with Native Americans, and incorporated recent foreigners into our country and our lives. Seeking to facilitate their faith, we strive to help everyone share in some way in the life of the Church so that everyone can be part of the “communio” that is one charism of our Order.

Inculturation is a process by which the Christian message is made understandable and important to all believers in the context of their culture. The word reflects the desire of all Christians to pray using their own language, signs, and symbols that accurately reflect the faith of the Church.

As Pope Francis writes in his apostolic exhortation The Joy of the Gospel, “Each portion of the people of God, by translating the gift of God into its own life and in accordance with its own genius, bears witness to the faith it has received and enriches it with new and eloquent expressions.

“When properly understood, this cultural diversity is not a threat to Church unity: It is he [the Holy Spirit] who brings forth a rich variety of gifts, while at the same time creating a unity which is never uniformity but a multifaceted and inviting harmony” (cf Evangelii Gaudium 116,117).

“Being disciples of Jesus means that we are open, welcoming and supportive. It means not assuming an attitude of closure, but of bringing the Gospel to all, bearing witness with our lives and following Jesus, which makes us freer and more joyful” (Pope Francis, St. Peter’s Square).

Fr. Steve Rossey, O. Praem., received an eagle sculpture from Svodoba Industries in 1989. He gave it to the Menominee people in 2012 to be painted and finished as an ambo by local craftsmen in celebration of the canonization of St. Kateri Tekawitha.

St. Willebrord Parish in Green Bay, a Norbertine parish since 1932, was first established by Dutch and Flemish immigrants in 1864. Since 1989 the church has evolved into an integrated vibrant Hispanic Catholic community.

Fragrant cedar greens and dried sage smolder in an upturned turtle shell at St. Michael’s on the Menominee Indian Reservation. The church is administered by the Norbertines.

“Each portion of the people of God, by translating the gift of God into its own life and in accordance with its own genius, bears witness to the faith it has received and enriches it with new and eloquent expressions.” – Pope Francis
Language and cultural barriers necessitated the founding of St. Willebrord Parish in downtown Green Bay, Wisconsin, 150 years ago. In 1864, a Catholic church for the Irish, another for the Germans, and yet another for the French were already established in the city. However, Dutch and Flemish settlers were without a faith community to call home, so 47 founding families came together to form St. Willebrord (c. 658-739), a church named after the saint who brought Catholicism to the Frisians in modern day Netherlands.

In a time of strong ethnic divisions among settlers, the feeling of separateness strongly influenced the culture of St. Willebrord Parish to instead become a faith community that emphasized open doors and a strong welcoming ethic. As the population density of the downtown district shifted over the decades, parish leaders and their Norbertine priests strived to discover ways to remain energized and relevant in the lives of the larger community.

Construction of the present stone and brick church was started in 1889, a full eight years after the cornerstone was placed. The soaring Gothic structure is engineered with a timbered truss roof and timber vaulting. Exterior buttresses for the walls allow for large expanses of stained glass windows.
In 1989, the parish embarked upon a transformational journey when it adopted the motto, “Open Doors, Open Hearts,” and started offering a Spanish-language Mass for the growing Green Bay area Hispanic population. Up until this time, the local Hispanic Catholics were itinerant, holding their services wherever space was available. According to Fr. ANDY CRIBBEN, O. PRAEM., the current pastor of St. Willy’s, as it’s affectionately known, “We’ve always been a community of people just looking for a home.”

This conscious act of outreach was a direct result of the Norbertine priests who had well served the parish since its handover from the diocese in 1932, and their long history of missionary work in the jungles and urban areas of Peru. Many priests were coming back from their vatican II-inspired service in South America fluent in Spanish and strongly influenced by social justice teachings. Fr. HArvEy TOONEN, O. PRAEM., approached St. Willebrord’s pastor, Fr. KEN DE GrOOT, O. PRAEM., seeking a place to schedule regular Masses for Hispanic immigrants. The parish would eventually undergo a powerful conversion that reinvigorated its aging Anglo population while simultaneously integrating new families and cultural practices into their faith community. Eight Masses are now offered every weekend—four in Spanish, three in English, and one is a blend of both languages.

Fr. Cribben said in an earlier interview, "No one here would tell you it's been easy to incorporate a community of different cultures and languages and countries of origin … but it’s the worthy work of building a community." (The Compass, “St. Willebrord Parish Celebrates 150th Anniversary,” Feb. 20, 2014)

The open door policy at the parish is both metaphorical and literal. Downtown residents find refuge in the church, many of whom may stop for a place to warm up, a hot drink, a sandwich, or a kindly greeting. The church is open at 6:30 a.m. and stays open some nights until 8 p.m. Daily Mass and confession are offered amidst the hustle and bustle of a parish that teaches more than 500 children in sacramental formation classes in both English and Spanish.

Sesquicentennial celebrations throughout the year center on special Masses and plenty of fellowship, group travel, and a November 7th feast of St. Willibrord that includes a dinner and dance at Green Bay’s Riverside Ballroom.

Since language and cultural barriers were the reason that St. Willebrord’s was formed 150 years ago, it’s ironic that those same gifts of the spirit grace its future. Today, the church serves 1,368 families, many of them still travelers on a journey. This time, however, they are traveling from outside the downtown area—and far beyond—to attend Mass and participate in an energetic church community that maintains its reputation for welcoming those in search of a home.
Eighty-four percent of those who completed a recent Center for Spirituality online survey indicated there was a great need for a spirituality center in the greater Green Bay area. With the increase in attendance at programs and retreats, this statistic seems to have been confirmed. Waiting lists had to be established for A Day for Men and a Morning for Women. The ever-popular Lenten series was filled on most Saturdays and the Volunteer Fair packed the room.

“The center has become a blessing in so many lives,” said staff members. “Participants often tell us that our programs and retreats feed their souls, and they are so grateful.”

Given the increased demand, additional summer retreats have been added. Fr. Kevin Schneider, SJ, a popular retreat facilitator and Prémontré alum, is offering Finding God in All Things: A Silent Ignatian Retreat from June 13-15. Directed retreats are offered June 15-21. Day-long retreats include: Ordinary Moments: Finding the Sacred in our Everyday Lives; Unplugged: Reconnecting with the Rhythms of Life; Pottery as Prayer; Day of Prayer and Reflection; and a Centering Prayer Retreat.

In response to the overwhelming popularity of Pope Francis, programs regarding Franciscan spirituality (Sr. Anne Marie Lom, OSF) and the “Francis effect” (Fr. Tim Shillcox, O. Praem.) will be offered in the fall. Heeding the call from Pope Francis to serve the poor and marginalized, a second Volunteer Fair is being offered in October. Ten representatives from local organizations will share their volunteer needs and participants, in turn, have an opportunity to talk directly with the spokespersons to see if their organization might be a “fit.”

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

Addressing the unique aspects of living lives of faith as men

On March 29, more than 150 men of all ages, including five guests from St. John the Evangelist Homeless Shelter, filled St. Norbert Abbey to capacity for a day of compelling presentations, Mass, and a keynote address from Coach Joe Lombardi, offensive coordinator for the Detroit Lions and grandson of Vince Lombardi.

“The response was overwhelming. What an awesome day,” stated Fr. James Baraniak, O. Praem. “And we are extraordinarily pleased that the relationship between the Norbertine Community and the Lombardi family continues two generations later. The hallmarks of faith, family, and football—in that order—inspire and motivate Coach Joe Lombardi as much as it did his grandfather, Vince, many years ago.”

Given the tremendous response, additional programming for men will be included in the Center for Spirituality’s list of fall presentations. Please note A Day for Men will again be held in spring 2015.

To view a full photo gallery from A Day for Men, visit norbertines.org.
Norbertine Vocations

Catch the Spirit!

If you or someone you know may be interested in a purposeful life as a Norbertine priest or brother, please contact: Fr. John Tourangeau, O. Praem.
e-mail: vocations@norbertines.org
(920) 403-3075
News, Honors and Distinctions

In Formation
By Katrina Marshall

Vested in the white Norbertine habit in August 2010, Frater Jacob Sircy, O. Praem., and Frater Brad Vanden Branden, O. Praem., are currently in their second year of the Juniorate, the period of Simple Vows in the Norbertine Formation process. In this stage of their journey toward priesthood, the Fraters continue to take classes at Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in Chicago. Frater Sircy is on track to earn a masters’ degree in divinity, and Frater Vanden Branden is pursuing masters’ degrees in both divinity and liturgy. In addition to their studies, both men are also actively ministering to the Chicago community in several ways.

Frater Sircy works with a catechetical program for people with mental disabilities called “Faith and Fellowship” in Oak Park, Illinois. He also assists with the RCIA program at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Hyde Park. Based on his experiences, Frater Sircy said, “I can be of help in working with the RCIA program in a parish, as well as a minister to those with mental disabilities in a church setting, helping them to become more comfortable with the Church and vice versa.”

Frater Vanden Branden works at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Chicago’s Lincoln Park neighborhood, where he helps promote liturgical catechesis. “When I started this assignment, I wanted to gain experience in helping adults understand the importance of liturgy and how it relates to our faith as Catholics. In all of the catechesis I’ve been doing with people, I have learned so much from their tough questions, struggles, joys, and successes that they bring to their own ministries in the parish,” he said.

In January, Frater Jordan Neeck, O. Praem., joined Fr. Salvatore Cuccia, O. Praem., and seven men from St. Norbert College for a week of service at Our Brothers’ Place, a shelter for homeless men in Philadelphia. Each day was spent learning about work with the homeless, performing manual labor, serving lunch, and interacting with the guests. This was the ninth year that Fr. Cuccia and men from St. Norbert have served at the shelter, and the third year that Frater Neeck has participated.

Frater Jordan Neeck, O. Praem., returned this spring to live at St. Norbert Abbey after spending his first year Norbertine novitiate at Daylesford Abbey in Paoli, Pennsylvania.

Frater Matthew Dougherty, O. Praem., is founder and editor-in-chief of Theophilus: The Student Journal of the Catholic Theological Union (CTU). Theophilus launched its inaugural issue April 14, on which date Frater Dougherty also hosted the Theophilus Symposium. The publication is a student-managed, reviewed and edited Catholic journal of theology and pastoral ministry. It publishes peer-reviewed articles written by students of CTU. For more information, visit www.theophilusjournal.org.

In March, Frater Matthew Dougherty, O. Praem., presented his paper, “Back to the Future: Contemporary Premonstratensian Retrieval of their Identity as Canons Regular,” at the Vagantes Medieval Conference at the University of Texas at Austin.

In January, Fr. Roman Vanasse, O. Praem., offered a presentation entitled, “The Future of the Church: Progressive, Conservative, or Evangelical?” at the Norbertine Center for Spirituality at St. Norbert Abbey. Fr. Vanasse authored a paper inspired by this program that can be read online at www.norbertines.org.
Last summer, **KATIE RIESTER** and **KATIE STIEL** began their commitment to both the Norbertine Volunteer Community (NVC) and their respective volunteer sites. Riesterer has been teaching fifth through eighth grade language arts at St. Thomas More School in Green Bay, WI. Stiel has been at the American Foundation of Counseling Services Foster Care Program, for which she has been developing an independent living program that teaches social, transitional, and independent living skills to youth ages 10 to 18. Reflecting on the time they have spent volunteering and living together in community as members of the NVC, the two women agree that the experiences they have shared have been rewarding.

“The encouragement and friendship of the NVC, the smiles and academic achievement of my students, and God’s relentlessly amazing grace are just three of the many gifts I have received while being a volunteer teacher,” said Riesterer. “Through my experience with the NVC, I have really learned that I can lean on God for everything, I have the confidence to ask others for help and support, and I enjoy the beauty of this life so much more.”

“My work atmosphere tremendously fuels my need for maintaining a positive outlook when serving in a treatment foster care agency,” said Stiel, who feels she has gained the knowledge, tools, and support for pursuing a career in the field of social work by focusing on child welfare, child advocacy, and mental health. “The NVC emphasizes the presence of God in all aspects of life. The continual nourishment of this state of mind has increased my personal and overall happiness.”

If you would like to learn more about the NVC, a full-time service opportunity and outreach program of the Norbertine priests and brothers of St. Norbert Abbey, contact Ellen Mommaerts, Director, at (920) 403-2944, or via e-mail at ellen.mommaerts@snc.edu.

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**Letters to the Editor**

As I finished reading the Abbey Magazine’s article, “The Call Came 50 Years Ago,” my reaction was “so Biblically prodigious!” Prodigious as “very great, huge, vast”—consider the enormous blessing of healing Fr. Jack MacCarthy has given to thousands, the vast education to staff and patients alike, the huge amount of love selflessly doled out in long hours, skilled practices, and spiritual direction. Biblical as in Matthew’s 25:37-40: Serving the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, lonely, and imprisoned.

Perhaps Fr. Jack need not fret about who will carry on. That adage comes to mind of “rather than give people a fish to eat for a day, teach them to fish and they can eat for a lifetime.” How wonderful that Fr. Jack has taught the locals how to minister to the sick and take better care of themselves.

Thank you, Fr. Jack. Your inspired service is inspirational.

**Cynthia V. Bomber**
Mauston, Wisconsin

I just want to say thank you for a wonderful article on Blessed Mother Teresa in the last issue. I have read a good amount of material on Mother Teresa, but I have never had the pleasure of reading her own hand-written letters. Beautiful, just beautiful! There is beauty in being able to actually see the written word, but the personal messages were also inspiring. I even cut one of them out—“Let God use you without consulting you.” What a wonderful reminder to all of us. It is such a blessing to know that the ministry she was part of with Fr. Mulroy so many years ago is still serving people today. Thank you again. I look forward to an inspiring next issue.

**Meredith Lauer**
Neenah, Wisconsin

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**2014 Summer/Fall Calendar for St. Norbert Abbey**

**JUNE**
- 4 – What Are They Saying about Pope Francis and Poverty? (Br. Steve Herro), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 6 – The Solemnity of St. Norbert, Abbey Church, 4:30-5:30 p.m.
- 11, 18, 25 – Praying the Abbey Windows (Fr. Stephen Rossey), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 13-15 – Finding God in All Things: A Silent Ignatian Retreat (Fr. Kevin Schneider), Friday 4 p.m.-Sunday 1 p.m.
- 15-21 – Summer Directed Retreat, Sunday 4 p.m.-Saturday lunch
- 15 – Taizé Prayer, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
- 18 – Ordinary Moments: Finding the Sacred in Our Everyday Lives (Kathie Tilot, Judy Turba), 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**JULY**
- 8 – Heaven: Is It for Real? (Fr. John Tourangeau), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 19 – Unplugged: Reconnecting with the Rhythms of Life (Kathie Tilot), 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 20 – Taizé Prayer, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
- 30 – Pottery as Prayer (Sr. Gayle Bogdanowitz, Sr. Judy Miller), 10-11:30 a.m.

**AUGUST**
- 6 – Centering Prayer Retreat (Kathie Tilot), 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 12 – Day of Prayer and Reflection (Sr. Judy Miller), 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 13 – Pottery as Prayer (Sr. Gayle Bogdanowitz, Sr. Judy Miller), 10-11:30 a.m.
- 15-21 – Summer Directed Retreat, Sunday 4 p.m.-Saturday lunch
- 17 – Taizé Prayer, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
- 28 – The Solemnity of St. Augustine, Abbey Church, 4:30-5:30 p.m.

**SEPTEMBER**
- 5-6 – Mindful Living through the Year: Seasons of the Spiritual Life (Rev. Lee Goodwin), Friday 4 p.m.-Saturday 3 p.m.
- 8 – Getting to Know Jesus through Literature (Fr. David Komatz), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 9 – Death to New Life: Transformation of a Father-Son Relationship (Fr. John Tourangeau), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 11, 18 – Finding Purpose in Times of Transition (Kathie Tilot, Judy Turba), 10-11:30 a.m.
- 12-14 – Deepening the Spiritual Life (Rev. Lee Goodwin, Sr. Judy Miller), Friday 4 p.m.-Saturday 9:45 a.m.
- 18 – The Legacy of Karl Rahner and the Challenge for Today (Dr. Howard Ebert), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 21 – Taizé Prayer, Abbey Church, 7 p.m.
- 23 – Art History for Men: 25 Works of Art Every Guy Should Know (Fr. James Neilson), 6:30-8 p.m.

**OCTOBER**
- 1, 8, 15, 22 – Wednesdays for Women (Sr. Shawn Madigan, Sr. Judy Miller), 10-11:30 a.m.
- 7 – Volunteer Fair: Making a Difference, 6:30-8 p.m.
- 8 – Canon John Bruce Memorial Organ Concert Series (Pater Stefan Kling), 7 p.m. (reception to follow)
- 9 – St. Francis Speaks to Us Today (Sr. Ann Marie Lom), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 13 – Getting to Know Jesus through Literature (Fr. David Komatz), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 16 – King David (Dr. Tom Bolin), 6:30-8 p.m.
- 18 – Sustaining the Spiritual Life (Rev. Lee Goodwin, Sr. Judy Miller), 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 18 – Breakfast for Men: Of Vice and Men (Fr. James Baraniak), 9:30-11 a.m.
- 19 – The Elements of Taizé Style Prayer followed by Taizé Prayer (Dr. Michael Frisch), 6:15 p.m.
- 23 – Pope Francis and the “Francis Effect”: From Admiration to Imitation (Fr. Tim Shillcox) 6:30-8 p.m.
- 30 – Conrad J. Kratz, O. Praem., Abbey Lecture: Enkindling Hope (Dr. Paul Wadell), 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.