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Letter to area congregations about the building of Main Hall

St. Norbert College

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St. Norbert's College.

WEST DE PERE, WIS., May 13th, 1901.

REV. AND DEAR FATHER:—

On Thursday, May 9th, a meeting was held at St. Norbert's College, West De Pere, Wis., with the Right Rev. Bishop, Mgr. Fox and a number of the diocesan clergy present. Its object was to discuss the advisability of erecting a suitable building for a Catholic college and the way of providing the necessary funds. As a result of the thorough and deliberate discussion of the matter, we have decided to go to work at once and erect a new building, equipped with all modern improvements, furnished with the necessary educational apparatus, and sufficiently large to accommodate a good number of students. The buildings used at present for St. Norbert's College are entirely too small to receive all the applicants, although it is only a short time since this institution was opened. Our plan is to make the college one of the best educational institutions of the kind, offering our Catholic boys a splendid opportunity to obtain a higher education. There will be a classical course as well as a commercial department, so that the college will be able to prepare boys for the Theological Seminary, that is for the priesthood, and give others such educational training as will fit them for business and higher professions in the world.

While it is unnecessary to point out the advantages of such an institution for Catholic boys who may have a vocation for the priesthood, it may not be useless to call the attention of all persons interested in Catholic education to the great and pressing need of educated Catholic laymen.

There are not enough Catholic institutions right among our Catholic people and near enough to our boys coming out from the parochial schools, to give them an easy opportunity for a high school and commercial training, fitting them for more prominent and influential positions among their fellowmen, while at the same time fostering and strengthening the Catholic faith in them. Without an institution of this kind, most of our Catholic boys looking towards a better place and position in the world are forced to go to high schools and colleges, where their Catholic faith and loyalty receives, to say the very least, no encouragement whatever, if it is not positively endangered. It is sad indeed to think that, while nearly all Catholic cities and larger towns have a Catholic academy or high school for girls, the Catholic boys are mostly left to themselves unless they study for the priesthood. Our proposed college intends to take care of these Catholic boys who are once to be, as loyal Catholic laymen, the strength and power of the Catholic church of the country. By this we desire to realize the wishes of our Right Rev. Bishop, and a great many of the clergy of our diocese, who some time ago met, and discussed the founding of a high school or college in Green Bay.

No need of saying that competent instructors will be employed, fully qualified to teach the different branches. If necessary we will also engage secular teachers, and no expense will be spared to make the undertaking a success as far as we are concerned. But we must have the encouragement and support of the Catholic clergy and people. We appeal especially to the clergy to bespeak their good will. If the parish priests will recommend our work to their people and advise parents to send their boys to our new college, we fear not for the future.
After discussing the way of raising the necessary funds which ought to be available as soon as we begin to build, the meeting advised us to adopt the plan of issuing bonds for a general loan. We will therefore issue a uniform series of bonds of $25.00 each, bearing interest at a rate to be agreed upon with each bond-holder. Any person may take as many bonds as he pleases.

This plan was adopted not only because it offers everyone an opportunity to help in this good work, but also because it will make the undertaking more widely known and engage for it the support of a far greater number than if a loan were made in the usual way. With the cooperation of the clergy in our project we feel confident that the Catholics of the diocese of Green Bay will generously come to our aid in buying the bonds to be issued for the new St. Norbert's college.

We take pleasure in adding the approval given to our proposed work by the Right Rev. Bishop:

GREEN BAY, Wis., May 13, 1901.

Very Rev. and Dear Father Pennings:—

Most sincerely and with a real pleasure do I give my approval and encouragement to the work you intend to undertake in building a new college at De Pere, Wisconsin. I hope it will be a God-send for the Catholic population of our diocese, especially the cities and towns of the Fox River Valley.

May God speed the work.

Very sincerely yours,

S. G. MESSMER, Bp.

We hope, dear Father, that you will inform your congregation of our proposed undertaking and with your kind permission one of our Fathers will come in the near future to address your people more fully on the subject.

With kind regards,

THE PRÆMONSTRATENSIAN FATHERS.