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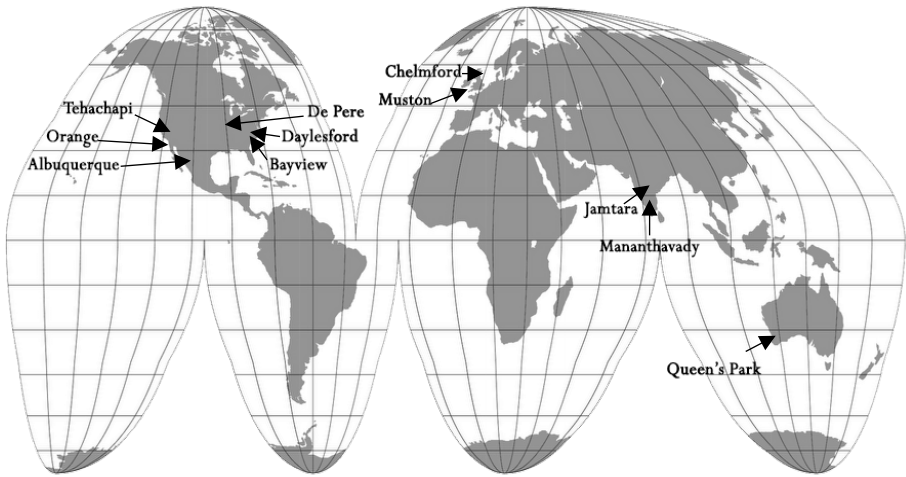
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of the
Order of Prémontré*

Editor:

V. Rev. John C. Zagarella, O. Praem. (Daylesford)

Assistant Editor:

Rev. Joseph McLaughlin, O. Praem. (Daylesford)

Canonry Correspondents:

Albuquerque: Rt. Rev. Joel Garner: joelpgarner@gmail.com

Bayview: V. Rev. James Herring: james.herring@icpbayview.org

Chelmsford: Rt. Rev. Hugh Allan: frhugh@hotmail.com

Daylesford: Rev. Joseph McLaughlin:
fmclaughlin@archmereacademy.com

DePere: Rev. Michael Brennan: mbrennan@norbertines.org

Jamtara: G. Christopher: christopheropraem@gmail.com

Mananthavady: bennpeeku@gmail.com

Muston: Rt. Rev. Andrew Smith:
andrewopraem@dioceseofmiddlesbrough.co.uk

Orange: V. Rev. Chrysostom Baer: cbaeropraem@gmail.com

Queens Park: Rev. Peter Stiglich: frpeter@norbert.wa.edu.au

Tehachapi: Mother Mary Augustine: MotherMaryA@aol.com

Send all correspondence and inquiries to Editor:

izagarella@daylesford.org
John C. Zagarella, O. Praem.
Daylesford Abbey
220 South Valley Road
Paoli, Pennsylvania 19301

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March 30, 2020

Reverend John Zagarella, O. Praem.
Daylesford Abbey
220 South Valley Road
Paoli, PA 19301

Dear John,

It is with a special delight that I send you this letter of appointment as editor of the Communicator in my role as Vicar of Abbot General Jos Wouters for the English-speaking canonries of our Order.

The COVID 19 crisis has everyone aware of social distancing, self-isolation, and mandated quarantine. The regular publication of the Communicator is an important antidote as its purpose is to remove barriers, foster Norbertine spirituality, and build koinonia.

Your own professional background makes you an ideal editor! You have university degrees in English and Communication Arts, Divinity as well as Counseling Psychology. Your education coupled with your years of in the classroom, in the parish, along with your diverse levels of leadership and service, mean that you have first-hand experience of all the apostolic efforts of Norbertines around the globe as they seek to live as faithful disciples of St. Norbert. Your appointment begins immediately and will continue until that time when you, your Abbot, and the English-language Vicar agree that another confrere should be appointed. I am glad that Fr. Joe McLaughlin, O. Praem. has agreed to collaborate with you as associate editor.

Please reach out to the prelates in our English-speaking canonries and ask them to identify their correspondents.

I look forward to seeing the first edition of the Communicator under your editorial leadership coming out soon as I remain,

Yours fraternally in St. Norbert,

The Right Reverend Eugene J. Hayes, O. Praem., JCD Abbot

CC: A.mus D. Jos Wouters, O. Praem.
Rev.mus D. Domenic Rossi, O. Praem.

A Reflection

Abbot General Jos Wouters, O. Praem.

Rome

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

“Among the great, he was great, humble among the poor, high ranking among the noble, temperate among the ignoble. He was made all things to all.” (1 Cor. 9,22) This quote from the *Vita B* is taken as the text of the responsory at the first vespers of the solemnity of our father, Saint Norbert. The original context is a description of Norbert’s character relating to why he was successful and beloved at the courts of the archbishop of Cologne and the emperor. The sketch of Norbert’s character in the *Vita B* also mentions that: “he followed his own judgment as a guideline and directed his life according to his judgment.” In the context of the life at the archiepiscopal or imperial court, this meant, of course, that he, independently from the opinion of those around him, indulged himself in all kinds of worldly pleasures. But the description of Norbert’s character, this blend of independency and kind affability, which made him to be “great among the great and humble among the poor,” applies to many episodes during his life as told by the authors of his *Vitae*.

In the *Vita A* we find a similar description of Saint Norbert, in the context of the narrative about the five more quiet years after he could neutralize the violent opposition against his policy of reclaiming the archdiocese’s full ownership of the ecclesiastical possessions: “These events took place in the third year of Norbert’s archiepiscopacy. After this he ruled for five years and from day to day gave honor to the ministry entrusted to him by God, advancing in all religion and virtue, preserving the unity of the holy church and resisting and protesting against those who disturbed it and against all schismatics, embracing the good, giving counsel to the desolate, supporting the poor and orphans and widows, fostering and helping to spread religious orders, while setting an example of religious life, presenting himself affably both to the lesser and the greater as the dignity of his office could bear. Mindful of the divine generosity and grace, he daily offered to the Lord his God an upright conscience with a pleasant and charming demeanor.”

Saint Norbert’s life of conversion did not change the firmness nor the kindness of his character but changed his scale of values and, therefore, his personal judgment, which he followed throughout his life. The change brought about by conversion was the ever-growing sense of God’s presence, which Norbert experienced while living with Christ as his guide,

an experience cultivated by prayerfully celebrating the Eucharist and meditating on Holy Scripture as a practical guideline.

I would like to highlight a few episodes from Saint Norbert's life as archbishop, showing his faithfulness to his *propositum*. They need to be interpreted while taking into account the hagiographic nature of the *Vita A*, a genre prone to its typical commonplaces. However, the narrative offers lively and probably meaningful details that exceed conventional hagiography.

“At Norbert's approach to the city, the people gathered. All gave thanks that they had deserved to receive a man of holy reputation as the shepherd of their souls. Gazing at the city of Magdeburg, to which he was being led, he entered barefoot. After he was received in the church, he entered the palace accompanied by many people. However, since he wore a shabby cloak, he was not recognized and was turned away by the doorkeeper. But when the porter was reprimanded by others, Father Norbert said, smiling, “Do not be afraid, you know me better and see me with a clearer eye than those who force me to this palace to which I, poor and simple, ought not to be raised.”

The *Vitae* underscore Norbert's reluctance to accept the archiepiscopal office, an accentuation rather inspired by the hagiographic genre than by historical facts, but the episode shows Norbert's desire to be a bishop in line with the Gregorian reform as he understood it. “Living in a time of upheaval and reform, he first understood this as a call to himself, as an invitation to change his life, to conform more and radically to his calling.” This understanding of reform as implying a call to personal poverty and simplicity is expressed by entering the archiepiscopal city as a poor penitent, but it gets a gentle note in the way he treats the doorkeeper by excusing him when he is reproved by others.

A similar evangelically inspired humanity appears in the context of the somewhat clumsy attempts to kill the newly appointed archbishop and in the narrative about the last riot against Norbert.

The *Vita A* has two stories about an attempt to kill Saint Norbert through the hands of a hired killer. The first one is found in the context of the reconciliation of penitents on Holy Thursday. The one sent to murder the archbishop presents himself disguised as a penitent, but Norbert unmasks him. His servants find a long sharp knife under the hit man's garment: “When asked why he had come so armed, the man fell at Norbert's feet trembling, stunned and fearing death, and confessed that he had been sent to kill the man of God. After hearing the names of those who had hired

him to commit the crime, all were amazed that household members and secretaries – men at whose hands official matters were handled – were found to be at the heart of the betrayal. The just Norbert, however, calmly responded that it was no wonder that the ancient enemy was preparing these snares for him since, on this same most sacred night, he persuaded the Jews to proceed to the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Norbert was happy that he was found worthy of sharing in the Lord's passion, especially on that day when mercy is given to those without hope, pardon to sinners, and life to the dead."

After a second attempt to take Norbert's life, the hitman flees, but: "...when others were pursuing the fleeing attacker to capture him, the man of God said: 'Let him flee. You should not render evil for evil. He did what he could and what God permitted'."

The narratives show how Norbert remains calm and steadfast in this critical situation. The literal imitation of Christ shows itself in his magnanimity towards those who were put forward to commit the crime from which their patrons shrank away. This did not imply that Norbert changed his design to reorganize the management of the diocese. He remained faithful to his plans to reform Magdeburg with the help of his confreres so that it might become a bridgehead of missionary activity in the wide region. But at the same time, he wanted to act peacefully, concretely guided by evangelical principles which he did not put aside to reach his goal.

The attempts to thwart Norbert's plans to reform the diocese culminated in a big uproar in 1129. The account of these riots can be found in chapters 19, and 20 of the *Vita A*. Norbert's adversaries tried to justify their actions with a false accusation (he would have broken altars in order to steal relics) and denied the lawfulness of the transfer of St. Mary's church to a chapter of Premonstratensians. During the skirmishes, Norbert's life is said to be endangered several times. During one of the fights, a soldier defending the archbishop is severely wounded. Shortly afterward, partly thanks to the intervention of influential noblemen of the region, the conflict is sufficiently appeased to allow Norbert to effectively govern his archdiocese during the five years ahead. The narrative of *Vita A* about the reconciliation probably gives a truthful account of both the magnanimity and the practical sense of Saint Norbert: "His adversaries gathered contritely and were humbled before him. He received them kindly and demanded only one thing of them, that they immediately are reconciled to his wounded soldier. This they accepted most willingly and repaired the soldier's ruined house, giving him forty silver marks in compensation for

the wound he received.” This attention of Saint Norbert to the factual situation of the common people that surrounded him tells us a lot about the spirit with which he wanted his communities to be inspired. He was not a mere tactician but remained a shepherd moved by love and compassion for the individual people in his care. This bifocal attention probably contributed to his success as a missionary. He succeeded not only to shape but also to inspire a structure that would bear fruit long after his death.

Abbot General Thomas Handgrätinger summarizes “...Norbert, who was fully committed to the small and the tangible, never lost sight of the big picture. He turned to the people in front of him, no matter what rank or position he was. If he noticed need or strife, he made it his own concern. If he came across injustice or falsehood, he could activate all powers to help the truth to victory and justice to breakthrough.” Norbert was great among the great and humble among the poor because he remained faithful to Christ as his guide in small and tangible things as well as in caring about the “big picture.” May he inspire us to be guided in everything, small and big, by God’s word as he was.



Live with the Risen Christ

P. Thomas Handgrätinger O. Praem
Hamborn

1 EASTER EXISTENCE

The revised Constitutions of our Order, approved by the General Chapter of 2018 held at Rolduc, starts with a programmatic reference to Norbert’s life. The first chapter¹ summarizes the intention of St. Norbert as “a charismatic innovator and reformer of the canonical life, inspired by the Gregorian reform” and reflects on the Rule of Saint Augustine. Norbert calls us “to live in accordance with the Gospel of Christ” and the apostolic life “in the hope of the Resurrection so that we might live with the Risen Christ.” This expression inspired me to think about our ‘Easter existence’ as Canons Regular according to the tradition of the Norbertine Order and invites us to meditate upon this essential, fundamental, and existential

¹ Constitutiones Ordinis Canonicorum Regularium Praemonstratensium, Rome, 2018, Chapter I,1.

connection, which qualifies our canonical identity.²

In Nr. 30, we can find the well-known reference to our white habit “Our white habit is a sign of our witness to the Risen Lord, the sanctity of life, poverty, and unity of the Order. Let it be used according to local customs, especially in liturgical services”. We remember the text Nr. 90 in the former Constitutions³, which indicated the triplex significance of the white habit as a sign of the sanctity of the life, for a tradition of the Church and for the unity of the Order. We missed the relation to the Risen Lord, which has now been added to the new Constitutions and specified by them. A fourth element is an accent on ‘poverty.’ The habit was a simple garment made of unbleached wool, the garment of the poor. For this we have to go back in our own Order’s tradition, which is handed over in the life description of St. Norbert, as we can read in *Vitas A and B*. Fr. Rainer Rommens, Roggenburg, wrote in his Easter meditation⁴:

“The Norbertines wear a totally white habit. ‘White’ is the color of the reformed Orders of the 12th century. The Cistercians, the Carthusians, and the Norbertines wear a habit made of unbleached wool as a sign of penitence. In the “*Vita Norberti*,” which hails from the second half of the 12th century and is, therefore, the oldest life-description of our Order’s founder Norbert, we can read on this point of choosing the color of the Norbertine habit: “But if there should arise any contention regarding color or thickness or thinness of clothing, let them, who have the power to decide in this regard, make a decision. Let them show from the rule, from the institution or the Gospel and apostles where witness and blackness or thinness or thickness is described and let the matter be settled. One thing is certain; however, the angels who were the witnesses of the Resurrection are said to have appeared in white, and by the authority and practice of the Church, penitents wear wool. Likewise, in the Old Testament, it was customary to go out among the people in woolen garments, but, in the sanctuary, by precept, linen garments were used. After the example of the angels, it seems that white should be worn, and as a sign of penitence, woolen garments should be worn next to the skin. But in the sanctuary of

² conf. Thomas Handgrättinger, *Drei Zugänge zur kanonikalen Spiritualität*. Here „Ostern“, in: Thomas Handgrättinger, *Begegnung und Sendung, Prämonstratenser-Spiritualität*, Magdeburg, 2014, p. 135-142.

³ Constitutions 1995, Schlägl 1997 (Latin-German-text), Nr. 90 „habitus regularis“.

⁴ Rainer Rommens, *Osterlicht – Trost und Freude oder: was der weiße Habit mit der Auferstehung zu tun hat?* in: *Oster Klosterzeitung, Digitale Sonderausgabe zum Osterfest, Roggenburg, April 2020*, p. 4-5.

God and during the divine service, linen should be worn.” (Vita A 12).⁵ By means of their white garments, the Norbertines want to be fulminous witnesses of the Resurrection and witnesses of the Good News!

2 WHITE HABIT

The first time we see this motif representing the white habit is in a Norbertine Breviary from Paris dated 1498. Under a medallion of the Virgin Mary with Child in a fiery nimbus, two angels hand over the white habit to the kneeling Norbert below the superscript “*ACCIPE CANDIDAM VESTEM*”; below them is the subscript “*Angeli vestem niveam ministrant.*”⁶ In another engraving in a Norbertine Breviary from Paris, 1507, titled “Norbert presents the community under the patronage of John the Baptist,” Norbert, dressed without insignia, receives the white habit from an angel, according to a late-medieval legend.⁷ Not until the 15th and 16th centuries do the legend emerge of Norbert receiving the white habit through Mary’s cooperation. The heavenly Mother appears personally to hand over the white garment to Norbert. Mary seems to say: “*Fili Norbert, accipe candidam vestem.*” In another engraving exemplar by D. and R. Custos, Augsburg, from the year 1605, we can find a small vignette on the side, showing two angels placing the white habit over the kneeling St. Norbert; here also is the inscription “*Accipe candidam vestem.*”⁸

⁵ In Vita B, Chapter XXIV, is said in almost the same words: “One thing is certain, however, the angels who were the witnesses of the Resurrection are said to have appeared in white, and by the authority and practise of the Church penitents wear wool. Likewise, in the Old Testament, it was customary to go out among the people in woolen garments but, in the sanctuary, by precept, linen garments were used. Because the Holy Father and our predecessors teach that preachers and those following the canonical profession should likewise be models of these angels, they should not cause scandal regarding these white garments. If they are penitents, and if their duty forces them to go out among the people, they should not be opposed to woolen garments. But if they are going to enter the sanctuary, they should not fail to use linen.”

⁶ Renate Stahlheber, *Die Ikonographie Norberts von Xanten, Themen und Bildwerke*. in: Kasper Elm (Hg.), *Norbert von Xanten. Adliger, Ordensstifter, Kirchenfürst*. Köln 1984, p. 217-235, here 222. Abb. 5.

⁷ idem, p. 222, Abb. 6.

⁸ idem, p. 231, Abb. 8.



Custos, Augsburg 1605

In the 16th century in the Swabian Abbey of Weissenau, abbot Jakob Murer (1523-1533) created a Norbert cycle containing 23 pictures and an abridged version of a 'Vita S. Norberti.' This work is very original and singular in its picture-language and is the oldest picture-series for a Vita of Saint Norbert, made a half-century before the canonization of Saint Norbert. The foundation of Prémontré is the main topic in this series. Here Norbert is seen as the active initiator and author during all the stages of the Order's foundation, making all the decisions for the place, for the rule, for the habit, for the organization of the religious life. What is interesting for us in this context of the question of the habit are the pictures XII-XIV. Norbert is speaking to six confreres about the white habit, that the white color has a relation both to the white garment of the angel at the tomb as well as to the white garment of the high priest in the Old Testament. In picture XIII, Norbert receives the habit from two confreres. "*Norbertus Christi Charitate vulneratus candido amictu induitur. Norbert... fratribus hic suos candidam vestem induit*". The election of a white habit is here not the result of inspiration from above, but more a practical decision to use the cheapest and lowest-priced garments made of undyed, uncolored sheep wool. Later on, a symbolic interpretation brought in arguments based on Holy Scripture, and this became a big issue and central theme in the early literature of the Order. The habit of the Norbertines reminds us of the white color of the angels at the tomb of Jesus, now seen as "*vestimentum album et angelicum*," as an expression of the task of the Norbertines to announce

the Risen Christ to the people and to proclaim the Resurrection of the Lord. Pope Gregory the Great (540-604) had once written a homily on the Gospel of Mark, chapter 16:1-7, about “The Resurrection of Jesus.” This homily was placed in the Breviary of the Norbertines for the first Easter Sunday and spoke about the importance of the white vestments of the angels, in relation to this explanation about the white color of the Order’s habit.⁹

The white-colored Norbertines, like the habits of many other reformed Orders, should be witnesses to the Easter mystery and announcers of the Easter message, which has changed all rational expectations.

In the famous Norbert cycle of 36 engravings by the copperplate engravers C. and Th. Galle, which was ordered by Chrysostomus van der Sterre (1629-1652), who later became the abbot of St. Michael’s Abbey in Antwerp, Norbert, receives the white habit held by two little angels from Mother Mary. The inscription says in Latin and German: “*Omni tempore sint vestimenta tua candida*”(Eccles 9.8); and “*Norberto niveas vestes, ceu signa pudoris, Offert Angelica Virgo Maria manu. Das weisse Ordenskleid Norberto zum Liebes-Pfand, Maria reichet dar mit Mütterlicher Hand.*”

The intention of this Galle cycle created some 40 years after the canonisation of St. Norbert in 1582, is to present Norbert in a more passive role and guided by heavenly “influencers.” Everything he was doing was an initiative from heaven: the foundation of the Order (cross-vision), the choice of the rule (handed over by Saint Augustine), the election of the habit (handed over by Mother Mary and by angels). Recalling the heavenly founders was like an anticipation of the canonisation of the founder Norbert¹⁰ and is shown more importantly as papal or episcopal approval and confirmation. This form of handing over of a religious vestment is not singular and is also used for other founders of Orders and Congregations.¹¹

3 EASTER MEAL

We can find another approach to the topic of this reflection in an interesting picture, again taken from the Norbert cycle of Weissenau, Swabia. Picture VIII shows an outdoor scene: Norbert, who is sitting at a large table with thirteen confreres, like the idea of the Last Supper, is celebrating the first Easter feast in Prémontré with a festive Easter dinner.

⁹ idem Stahlheber, p. 228-230, pictures XII-XIV.

¹⁰ Pope Gregory XII canonized St. Norbert on July 28, 1582.

¹¹ idem Stahlheber, p. 225, 228, Galle cycle, engraving Nr.15.

On the table are a large plate with the lamb and bread and drinking cups. Norbert takes the place of Jesus, and all the confreres are looking and listening to him. We are reminded of the Last Supper of Leonardo da Vinci. An oil painted copy of this famous fresco can be admired at the Abbey of Tongerlo, Belgium.



The first Easter meal in Prémontré¹²

Usually, we see in our minds the Christmas scene of December 25, 1121, which was the origin and beginning of our Norbertine Order. Norbert and his followers, all dressed in white habits, are making their solemn profession, and are placing their signed documents on the altar of Prémontré. Now here in this cycle of Norbert's life, we have a strong accent on the Easter event, which underlines the main goal to 'live with the Risen Christ,' to proclaim by our words, and more so by our lives, the mystery of the Resurrection. Neither Vita A nor B has this tradition of an Easter meal. In this picture, the main intention of Norbert is expressed more in an indirect way by putting Norbert in place of Jesus. "In the iconography of St. Norbert, the *'Imitatio Christi,'* which was so important to the high medieval Orders in general, is conjured up in no other case, nor in such an impressive way, as in this picture, where the Norbertine

¹² © Waldburg-Zeil'sches Gesamtarchiv Schloß Zeil (Archivsign. ZAM 41).

community identifies so unmistakably with the disciples of Christ and with the apostolic Church.”¹³

This for us so famous Christmas scenery, depicted here in picture XI by the adoration of the child Jesus by shepherds, is combined with the following scenery in picture XII, where Norbert and his disciples are looking at the white-clad angel holding a cross, which refers to the empty tomb, and that Christ is preceding them to Galilee. The text says here: “*Visum erat Norberto se suosque candida veste, immaculatam, ac angelicam vitam significante vestivi. Et assumpsit hoc ex Evangelio, cum angeli testes resurrectionis in albis apparuisse, leguntur.*” The birth of Christ and his Resurrection, Christmas, and Easter are here combined and relate to one another in this Christocentric image. Here we also have to include the vision of the Crucified Lord on the Cross at the finding of the location of Prémontré (picture XV), and the appearance of the Holy Cross at the foundation of the Abbey church (picture XVI). It is clear that abbot Jacob Murer wanted to show his confreres Norbert in his active phase as the founder of the Order, and during that agitated time of the Reformation he intended to underline the three main points of Norbert’s life: preaching, following the Gospel and the ‘*Imitatio Christi*.’¹⁴ The strong significance of the white habit as a reference to the angels at the empty tomb, as well as proclaiming the Resurrection, and Norbert’s first Easter dinner with his confreres, are important challenges for the Norbertine Order to witness and proclaim this Easter mystery in our communitarian life and pastoral missions.

Several times I was present at the Easter vigil in St. Peter’s in Rome, sometimes sitting directly behind the candidates for baptism, confirmation, and first Holy Communion. The liturgy of confirmation immediately following baptism was opened with the Pope’s prayer for the newly baptized candidates, who were vested with a white garment during their baptism: “Dear Neophytes, you are now born through baptism to life as children of God, and you are now members of Christ and his priestly people. Now you will receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which the Lord poured out over the apostles on the day of Pentecost. Also, you will finally receive, according to his promises, the power of the Holy Spirit to become more and more conformed to Christ, so that you may witness the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord and may become an active member of the Church to edify the body of Christ in faith and love.”

¹³ idem Stahlheber, p. 230.

¹⁴ idem Stahlheber, p. 232.

Here the mandate and task to be a witness of the Passion and Resurrection is given to each Christian at his confirmation. This mandate is made possible and feasible with and through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We as Norbertines, permanently dressed in white vestments, have this special mandate from the beginning of our Order, to witness the Resurrection in our life and with our life, which presupposes to live with the Risen Lord in faith and hope.

4 LIVE WITH THE RISEN CHRIST

What does it mean to ‘live with the Risen Lord’? These two pictures invite us to say that an Easter existence means both communion and witness.

4.1 Communion

The two wanderers on the way to Emmaus invited an unknown man to stay with them for supper, “*stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over*” (Luke 24:29). Their communication, their talking, and discussion along the way about everything that had happened in Jerusalem, between these two followers and then with a “third man,” was a process of exchange, of listening, of openness, of expressing feelings, meanings, frustrations, and sadness. During this communication, there occurred a communion of minds; there was an interior burning of hearts, a desire to stay and remain together, to continue this experience of community in a more intense and profound manner, to eat together as a sacral moment of life. Breaking bread became the main sign of Christianity, of community, of hope and future. And in all upcoming meetings of the Risen Lord with his disciples and apostles, it was always this same form of communication, of eating together, of nearness, of openness, of speaking and giving peace, of forgiveness and consolation. During this time of Coronavirus, this was the most incisive and drastic experience of missing communion, community, common celebrations, and especially visits to elderly and aged people in quarantine, isolation, and seclusion. Easter means newly experiencing communion, collection after dispersion, discussion and talking after silence and depression, community after isolation and withdrawal, hope, and new perspectives after despair and resignation.

4.2 Witness

“*So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem ... the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread*” (Luke 24:33-35). After the meeting follows the mission, after the encounter with the Lord, they were moved and willing to witness their meeting with the Risen Lord, with ‘burning,’ restless

hearts. After their communion with the Risen Christ, now comes the communication about their deep and revolutionary experience with the resurrected Christ. We cannot say much about the fact and event of the Resurrection; nobody was present, and there were no eyewitnesses. This event transcends the field of our human experience, even the capacity of our human imagination. What we can see and the conclusions we draw are based on the reaction of the apostles and disciples who had immediately started to relate, to proclaim, to announce and to witness their new conviction and faith in this Risen Lord. Easter existence means that we cannot be silent: *“It is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard”* (Acts 4:20). Before the Sanhedrin, Peter and the apostles said: *“The God of our ancestors raised Jesus, though you had him killed by hanging him in a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as leader and savior ... we are witnesses of these things, as is the Holy Spirit that God has given to those who obey him”* (Acts 5:30-32). Does our preaching, telling and behaviour in life fully witness to this Easter mystery, are we convinced that the Risen Lord stands at our side throughout all the small deaths of our life, through the small experiences of daily life of dying and losing? Are we convinced that God protects us on the way, in death, and through death, as the Father had done with Jesus?¹⁵

4.3 Future

At the tomb, the white-garbed angel said, *“Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised”* (Luke 24:5-6); at the tomb, a young man, clothed in a white robe, said, *“He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him”* (Mark 16:5-7). The Risen Lord is not there where we are seeking, by looking for him in the cemetery, imagining him in the grave, cultivating him in the past, and closing him up in antiquated churches. He is not here, where we want to meet and have him; he goes before us, he is living for the future, he is the living future, ever young, alert, alive and opens up all the possibilities of life and hope. This openness to the future is the main sense of Resurrection. The Risen Lord goes before us in whatever will happen to us; in him, all things are conquered and surmounted; he is part of our life, our normal life, and is with us in anxiety and mortal fear, sickness and hopelessness, passion and death. He is before us, and he wants us to see him, to be with him, that also for us the future will be open in endless, eternal life in Him. To live with the Risen Christ means communion with him; it means witnessing that he

¹⁵ conf. Richard Rohr, *Alles trägt seinen Namen*. Gütersloh, 2019, p. 120; 226s. (Original title: “Another name for everything. Why Christ is more than Jesus’s Last Name “).

is living and having faith that we will arise with him and in Him, in His love and light.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3-4).



The Conversion of Saint Augustine

Friday, April 24, 2020

Rev. Nicholas R. Terico, O. Praem.

Daylesford

*The Memorial of the Conversion of Saint Augustine is **the story of a soul’s journey to God.** Or, perhaps, we might say **the story of God’s tireless pursuit of his beloved and the attentiveness and openness of that soul to God’s love at last!** Conversion, or the turning to God, is a movement that is possible for us at every moment of our journey, not simply once and forever, but continually and ever more deeply. As we ponder Saint Augustine’s life struggle with God and his final conversion, perhaps we might consider places in our lives where we, too, need conversion of our ways, not once and for all, but in an ongoing way, and pray to Saint Augustine for help in our journey toward God.*

During the Easter Vigil, on the night between April 24th and 25th, in the year 387, Augustine was baptized in the Cathedral of Milan by Saint Ambrose, who was then its Bishop. Baptized, along with Augustine, was a small group of friends, including Alypius, the “brother of his heart,” and Augustine’s son, Adeodatus. His mother, Monica, was also present. And so was brought to its happy end the long and tiring journey of Augustine’s conversion to the Catholic faith. Augustine himself records in Book Eight of the Confessions, the climactic moment in which he surrendered to God’s grace and was relieved of the doubts and fears which had so long kept him in a spiritual prison. It is both interesting and significant that the heading of Book Eight of the **Confessions** is entitled ***In the Garden*** because it was in a garden where Augustine struggled against himself to let himself go and surrender to God. He wrote:

Then, during that great struggle in my inner house, which I had violently raised up against my own soul, in my heart, I was troubled both in mind and in countenance.

Just as Jesus Christ struggled with himself in a garden, so did Augustine have his own agony there. ***I flung myself down...and gave free rein to my tears,*** wrote Augustine, ***I wept within my heart. And lo, I heard from a nearby house, a voice like that of a child chanting and repeating over and over, take up and read, take up and read. Tolle Lege, Tolle Lege.*** At first, he thought that the song was related to children's games, but he could not remember ever having heard such a song before. Then, realizing that this song might be a command from God to open and read the Scriptures, he located a Bible, picked it up, opened it, and read the first passage he saw. It was from Paul's Letter to the Romans 13:13-14, which comprises today's First Reading:

Not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual excess and lust, not in quarreling and jealousy. Rather, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.

Reading this scripture, Augustine felt as if his heart were flooded with light, and he turned totally from his life of sin. Later, reflecting on this experience, he wrote his famous prayer: ***You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you!*** Now Augustine was at peace! That peace is reflected in today's Responsorial Psalm from Psalm 131:

In you, Lord, I have found my peace...I have stilled and quieted my soul like a weaned child on its mother's lap, so is my soul within me.

All the Readings of the liturgy today were chosen specifically and purposely because they so well reflect Augustine's struggle and life's journey of conversion to Christ. I find them all deeply moving but none so as today's Gospel from Luke about the widow of Nain and her dead son, her only son, and support, being carried for burial. It would make for a wonderful Ignatian imaginative contemplation it seems to me. First, pray to the Holy Spirit for inspiration and guidance. Then place yourself in the scene, perhaps as one of the large crowds, Luke mentions that had gathered from the city to support this grieving woman. Or maybe you are one of the disciples with Jesus or maybe one of the pallbearers right up close to what is going on. Then take note of all the details and get the feel of the atmosphere. Next, look full at Jesus and the expression on his face as he is moved with pity for this widowed mother. What would you feel as Jesus stops the procession and tells the mother to weep no longer? He touches

the coffin. The pallbearers stop. Feel the suspense and tension in the air. Now Jesus even addresses the dead man and calls him to arise, and he does, and begins to speak! Then Jesus gives the young man back to his mother. We are told that fear seized the crowd, and they begin to glorify God, exclaiming that ***a great prophet has arisen in our midst, and God has visited his people.*** What emotions would you be experiencing then? What are you experiencing now as you reflect on the scene and what you have witnessed firsthand? Now relate this scene to Augustine's life. Why was this Gospel chosen for this feast? Perhaps, Monica is the widowed woman, and Augustine is the dead man, dead to sin, dead from a sinful life. Jesus is moved with pity for her after her years of worry and prayer for her son's conversion and tells her to weep no longer. After all her years of sorrow, struggle, and worry, prayer is about to be answered. Then Jesus raises Augustine from the death of his sinful life, finally answering Monica's years of prayer. And Augustine is given back to his mother, a new man in Christ as she had hoped and prayed. This passage from Luke's Gospel tells us that the young man who was dead and who had just been raised to life again began to speak. What might that man, Augustine, want to say to each of us personally today, we who are his followers in life? What might Augustine want to say to us who consider ourselves an Augustinian community? What is it touching our hearts as we listen to this story of conversion that is so familiar to us that perhaps we might hear this day, afresh and anew? Let Augustine's closing words of Book Eight of the Confessions speak to us about God's fidelity in pursuit of our souls and God's power to do **for and with us** for more than we can dream or imagine:

Thereupon we went to my mother and told her the story, and she rejoiced. We related just how it happened. She was filled with exultation and triumph, and she blessed you, O God, "who is able to do above that which we ask or think." She saw that through me, you had given her far more than she had long begged for by her tears and groans. For you had converted me to yourself.... You turned her mourning into a joy far richer than that she had desired, far dearer, and purer than she had sought....



Daylesford Chronicle

Rev. Joseph McLaughlin, O. Praem.

The Daylesford Chronicle in the June 2019 Communicator ended with the words: "Seventy is the sum of our years, or eighty if we are strong" (Psalm 90:10). Daylesford's senior confrere, Joseph Laenen marked his 94th birthday on May 15, 2019, in Regina Nursing Home, Norristown, PA; he died there on July 30, 2019. Joseph was vested in 1944 in Tongerlo Abbey, where he was also professed and ordained. After years as a missionary in the Congo, Joe served in France, Canada, and since 1982 at Daylesford. He was, for many years, the chaplain at Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital in Darby, PA. Abbot Domenic Rossi was the main celebrant of Joe's Mass of Christian Burial on August 12, 2019, the 68th anniversary of Joseph's priesthood ordination.

Some confreres have marked milestone birthdays: Joseph Mulholland (85 on 5/12/19), Francis Danielski (70 on 1/18/20), Carl Braschoss (50 on 4/18/20), Abbot Richard Antonucci (75 on 4/17/20). In early March, Joseph Mulholland moved into Regina Nursing Home, where he died on April 19, 2020.

After graduation from Southeast Catholic High School in Philadelphia in 1955, Joseph Mulholland entered Daylesford; he was vested in March 1956 and professed vows in March 1958. He served for almost 40 years at Saint Norbert Priory/Bishop Neumann High School in Philadelphia. He served briefly at Archmere Academy (1997-2001). He came to Daylesford in 2002 and served as a part-time receptionist and assistant infirmarian. He would often say to confreres, "Have a blessed day." Abbot Domenic was the celebrant of Brother Joe's private Funeral Mass on April 25; John Joseph Novielli was the homilist.

Jordan Neeck (DePere) made his ordination retreat at Daylesford in April 2019. Prior David Driesch and William Trader attended Jordan's First Mass in DePere in June. Other confreres also traveled to DePere during the last year: Abbot Richard, Andrew Ciferni, Maurice Avicolti. On December 5, 2019, Andrew Ciferni was appointed Chair of the Board of Trustees of Saint Norbert College; Andrew was already on the Board.

Arul Amalraj (Jamtara), Francis Micek (Strahov), and Henry Jordanek (Strahov), all traveled to their home canonries in 2019. Francis moved from Daylesford to Albuquerque in August. Henry went to Wilmington, CA, to serve as a translator for the Norbertine Sisters. Henry's father and two nephews visited Daylesford in July.

In July 2019, John Zagarella went to Košice, Slovakia, to teach English and American culture for two weeks at the invitation of Abbot Ambrose of Jasov. Abbot Ambrose and two lay teachers visited Daylesford and Archmere in January 2020. In November, John also went to India to teach students and seminarians at the invitation of Father Alois Anthanattu of Manathavady. Andrew Ciferni went to Windberg in October 2019 for a meeting of the Spirituality Commission of the Order; he then attended a meeting of the Liturgical Commission. Also, in October, Abbot Richard and John J. Novielli visited Saint Michael's Abbey. Abbot Domenic and Prior David made retreats in Albuquerque in January 2020.

In May 2019, Abbot Peter and Sister Katelin of Zambeck, Hungary, visited Daylesford and Archmere. Jacob Mannheimer and Jeremias Kelren of Hamborn visited Daylesford and St. Norbert Parish in July. Patrick Busskamp (Wilten) visited Daylesford in January 2020 to re-connect with Theodore Antry, who had preached at Patrick's First Mass in 2002.

Father Martin Bartels, OSB, led the community retreat at Daylesford in August 2019. Father Allan Fitzgerald, OSA, led the community's Advent day of recollection on December 4, 2019. Father Kevin DiPrinzio, OSA, led the community's Lent day of recollection on March 4, 2020.

On August 25, 2019, Joseph Serano marked the Golden Jubilee of his priesthood ordination at the Abbey's Sunday Summa; a reception followed in the dining room. Joe is currently the Abbey's treasurer, the advisor to the Norbertine Associates, director of the Mail Campaign, director of programming for the Spirituality Center, and editor of the Abbey's newsletter. He also gives retreats and, for many years, was a theology teacher at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia.

On August 27, 2019, Andrew Ciferni celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial for his mother, Emilia Rose Ciferni Piotti, who died on August 23 at age 100 (born June 14, 1919). During all of Andrew's 60 years as a Norbertine, Millie was well known to so many Norbertines who enjoyed her hospitality and Italian cooking. The Funeral Mass was at Saint Edmond Church in South Philadelphia, the Ciferni family parish for many years.

On August 28, 2019, Jeffrey Himes professed Solemn Vows on the Solemnity of Saint Augustine. Jeff is currently a theology student at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in Wynnewood, PA. During the summer of 2019, Jeff did pastoral work at Saint Norbert Parish under the supervision of pastor Steven Albero. August 28 also marked some milestone

anniversaries: Francis Cortese - 65 years vested, Theodore Antry - 60 years professed, Maurice Avicolti, and Andrew Ciferni - 60 years vested.

Saint Gabriel Parish in South Philadelphia marked its 125th anniversary on October 27, 2019. Pastor Carl Braschoss celebrated the Mass; concelebrants included Abbot Richard, Abbot Domenic, Francis Cortese, Michael Lee (Homilist), John Joseph Novielli, Joseph Serano. Norbertines have been serving as pastors of Saint Gabriel Parish since 1982.

The following have celebrated school masses at Archmere during the current school year: Joseph McLaughlin - 9/14, John Zagarella - 10/12, Joseph Serano - 11/1, Abbot Domenic - 11/22, Andrew Ciferni - 12/12, Prior David 2/26. Carl Braschoss was slated for the 3/19 Mass, which was canceled due to the pandemic.

The following confreres were in the hospital at different times since June 2019: Abbot Richard, Joseph Mulholland, Joseph McLaughlin, Maurice Avicolti, Francis Cortese, Francis Danielski. Former Daylesford confrere, James Love, died in a hospital in Wilmington, DE, on January 12, 2020, at age 78. Jim had served at both Bishop Neumann High School and Archmere Academy.

Linda Christopher, former Director of the Spirituality Center at Daylesford, died on November 5, 2019. Andrew Ciferni was celebrant and homilist of her Mass of Christian Burial at Daylesford on November 19. Linda's husband, Tom, serves as the Abbey's liturgical master of ceremonies.

On February 26, Nicholas Terico gave the Ash Wednesday Retreat, entitled, "Beginning Our Lenten Journey: The Great Forty Days." He did not see on Ash Wednesday how Lent 2020 would unfold to Holy Week. Masses are being celebrated each day but without a lay congregation. The following are serving as homilists: Palm Sunday - Andrew Ciferni, Holy Thursday - Joseph Serano, Good Friday - Nicholas Terico, Easter Vigil - David Driesch. Andrew Ciferni's two Triduum Talks are entitled "The Psalms of the Triduum." We are praying intensely for all those suffering from the virus.

On March 19, 2020, John Zagarella took up his new role as editor of the Communicator. On March 31, John sent a letter of invitation to the canonries of the English Circary, requesting news from each canonry and other items for publication. As the Coronavirus has required confreres to keep social distance, the Communicator will bring confreres and canonries

together, "of one mind and heart on the way to God" (Rule of Saint Augustine, I.2; Acts 4:32).



From Slovakia to India: The Dream of Saint Norbert & the Order of Prémontré Connects at Archmere Academy

V. Rev. John C. Zagarella, O. Praem.

Counting your blessings is a life lesson we are taught early on in life. However, I learned just this year that when your blessings are especially abundant, it is possible to lose count! In the second half of 2019, I was able to see to fruition invitations from two confreres to visit their Norbertine schools to teach there with the possibility of establishing a cooperative relationship between that school and Archmere Academy, a college preparatory school in the Norbertine Tradition in Claymont, Delaware, USA.

First, from July 1 – July 14, 2019, I went to the Premonstrátske Gymnázium in Košice, Slovakia at the invitation of their Headmaster and Abbot of Jasov, Ambroz Martin Štrbák, O.Praem. The gymnasium is a secondary grammar (high) school of approximately 150 boys and girls that opened its doors on September 2, 2013. My primary job there was to teach English, as these students must pass what is called a school-leaving exam before graduating in order to attend university in Slovakia. That school-leaving exam has two English components, one verbal (conversational) and one written. The students that participated in this voluntary two-week program are to be commended because it began the same day their summer vacation began! I taught them many topics about the United States, including geography, state capitals, housing, education, must-see places in the USA, government, and American holidays. I was also able to include a bit of Norbertine Spirituality. The students were terrific. The faculty members could not have been more welcoming or more hospitable and supportive. For some geographical context, Košice is the second-largest city in Slovakia (the first is the capital, Bratislava), in the eastern corner of the country with the borders to Ukraine one hour to the east, Poland one hour to the north and Hungary one hour to the south. Prague in the Czech Republic is eight hours west of Košice by train.

In November of 2019, during Thanksgiving week, I traveled to Bangalore, India, to make good on the second invitation I received. This one was from Fr. Alois Anthanatt, O. Praem., of Mananthavady Priory located in southern India. I spent two weeks traveling with Fr. Alois to Norbertine schools and establishments around the southern tip of India. It was amazing. I had no idea the work the Norbertines were doing in India...and I did not even see all of what they are doing. What I did see was extremely impressive. Saint Norbert School, where I spent the most time, is a school of 570 boys and girls, nursery school to 9th grade. Saint Norbert School was established in 2014 and will eventually go up to 12th grade as the current students' progress up through the grades. Every morning the students gather in the school courtyard to recite their prayer, sing a song of praise to God, say their pledge of allegiance, and sing happy birthday to whoever might be celebrating on any given day. In my travels, which covered about 1,000 miles, I saw three other Norbertine schools of between 1,200 to 1,800 students, met young men...and I mean young...ages 15-early 20's in various stages of Norbertine formation (aspirants, postulants, and Simply Professed). There is even a Norbertine special education school with 65 students enrolled. It is the only special education school in that part of India. I had the privilege of teaching in almost every school and even our aspirants, postulants, and Simply Professed fraters in their House of Studies.

It is an understatement to say that these two experiences were life-changing for me, especially as we are on the verge of celebrating our 900th Anniversary. And at this moment, all this amazing history and all these beautiful cultures and rich histories are coming together on Archmere's campus. In fact, on Tuesday, January 7, 2020, Abbot Štrbák came to visit Archmere with two of his colleagues, Deputy (Principal) Daniela Kravecova and Teacher of English, Katarína Semanova. We had an Assembly where I presented to our students and faculty my fabulous experience at Premonštrátske Gymnázium. That Friday, January 10th, we conducted a Tag Day to support our Slovak classmates. Now that these connections are made, our Director of Academics and Global Studies Coordinator, Mr. Timothy Dougherty, and I are in the process of formalizing cooperative relationships with Premonštrátske Gymnázium in Slovakia and with Saint Norbert School in India. The possibilities that these forming relationships open to our students and faculty and to the students and faculties of our sister schools are only beginning to be discovered. But what an extravagant blessing and opportunity this is to experience the beauty and depth of culture and history in Eastern Europe and India and to share the beauty of our own American culture and history

with these amazing students in Norbertine schools abroad! I am so immensely proud of Abbot Ambroz and Father Alois and their dedication, hard work, and leadership in fulfilling the dream of Saint Norbert and the Order of Premontre in their respective communities. I am proud to call them brother Norbertines.

Finally, I am excited beyond words to be a part of the relationships we are forging with our sister schools. May God be praised. Through the tercession of Saint Norbert, Minister of Peace and Concord, may this great global connection be greatly blessed!

With our students at Saint Norbert School, India





Students in front of the entrance to Premonštrátske Gymnázium, Košice, Slovakia



With Daniela Kravecova, Abbot Martin Štrbák, O.Praem and Katarina Semanova at Archmere Academy, Claymont, Delaware, USA





If we think as ‘we’ not ‘me.’

Rev. Benjamin, O. Praem.

Jamtara

Today, I am 64 years old and have completed 31 years (since 03.05.1989) as a Norbertine Priest. Years ago, when I was treated for ‘bypass’ surgery, I was frightened of dying because it was a traumatic experience. Family members, friends, confreres were with me to help me cross over the turbulent psychological crisis of post-surgery issues. This event, for me, has now become the history of the past.

But today I am more frightened than ever. Anyone who meets me or calls me, or messages says only one thing, “please take care, you are very vulnerable and can be infected by the deadly virus.” The worldwide pandemic called COVID-19 has shaken the very foundation of our faith, life, economy, and the world order. It is but natural that I would have sleepless nights. Anyone would. The sentiment expressed by me is not in isolation, but it is just a “dot” within a bigger picture. I believe many people will shake their heads in agreement with what I have said.

What is the remedy for my isolation and indefinite “lockdown?” Will I survive the storm of this frightening Coronavirus’ onslaught on humanity & institutions, etc.? How stupid am I? I was always thinking about “me.” But I realize now that the only way we are going to get through this (COVID -19) is if we feel as “we” not as “me.”

We all are destined to say goodbye to this world today or tomorrow or the day after. “Do not look forward to what might happen tomorrow; be at peace, then, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations,” “the same everlasting Father who cares for you today will take care of you tomorrow and every day.” Thinking as ‘we’ not ‘me’ motivated us to plunge into the well of troubles of the people though we do not know to swim.

We did not let ourselves get deterred by the bombardment of the media (inflating) with information when it came to our mission to reach out at the doorsteps of the people in distress. We witnessed, visited, and experienced the pain and agony of the people. With the assistance of the administrative team of the Canonry, we undertook several initiatives that allowed us to be at the forefront of service to the people. We took significant risks in going to the places where the viral contamination was

at its peak. We reached out to people who were desperate for one meal a day. We knocked at a number of government offices, going from the proverbial “pillar to post” to obtain necessary permissions to venture out into the hot spots and quarantined segments of society.

Many warned us of impending danger because the possibility of being infected by the Coronavirus was extremely high. The District Collector admonished me for coming out because of my age. We could not sit inside the presbytery having three meals a day, enjoying the luxury of praying three times (I am certainly not downplaying the importance of prayer, only stressing the equal if not higher importance of action) whereas the faithful beg to come to attend Holy Mass.

We were unable to comfort an old lady who was on her death bed. We could not administer Baptism to a parent who got a child after 11 years of marriage. We could not perform our ministerial duty of uniting a couple in the sacrament of matrimony. We could not attend the funeral of one of our confreres, Fr. Allwyn Gonsalves O. Praem. WHY? The churches are shut down for more than 45 days, and blanket curfew has been imposed by the government.

All these odds did not deter us from being with the people and helping them in their basic needs.

1. **Feeding the poor people:** To the date, we have provided raw food material to 160 extremely poor families. These people have been classified as ‘below the poverty line’ by the government. They have no job and no money to survive.
2. **Feeding the Migrant Workers & the homeless:** The sudden lockdown & curfew shattered the dreams of the people who traveled thousands of miles from North India in search of livelihood. No job, no money, no place to stay and the worst part are that they cannot go back to their native villages too.
3. **Providing food material to Police personnel:** Besides maintaining ‘law & order,’ the police force is pressed into containing the COVID-19. They do not visit their families for weeks.
4. **Providing food material to the lowest grade sanitary workers (Sweepers):** These people keep our city clean and are asked to do all the dirty jobs without proper equipment to protect them. Most of the people are low caste, and their salary is very low too.

5. **Providing sanitary items and safety suits and gloves to ‘front line workers:** These people are called ‘soldiers of the day.’ Their presence in the hospital 24x7 is greatly appreciated.
6. **Taking care of old & sick senior citizens and the physically & mentally handicapped people:** This is another important segment of our society. These people are most vulnerable to infection. All are interested in taking care of COVID-19 patients but somehow forget the senior & sick citizens and the handicapped people.

As I said above, we cannot sit within four walls and wait for the dawn to descend. Even if it dark at the end of the tunnel, at least we can move forward with a candle. The activities that are mentioned above are being carried out all over the country by the Norbertines in India. The Canonry of Jamtara is committed to the poor. Our confreres are tirelessly working with tribal people in Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, The Nilgiris, with most backward castes in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu; and with fisher folk & tannery workers in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Besides utilizing our human resources and money, most of all, we are taking a severe risk.

Today we cannot think of people as we used to – as particular families, or as a society, or even as State or Nation, but we have to begin to think of everyone as ‘the World’ at large. We have got to think as ‘we’ not as ‘me’ & ‘mine.’ The only way we are going to get through this (COVID -19) is **if we think as ‘we’ not ‘me.’**

May the Risen Lord see us through this pandemic!

Fr. Benjamin O. Praem,
Canonry of Jamtara,
Parish Priest, Mount Premontre’,
St. Antony’s Church
Kothumudi, Ooty,
The Nilgiris – 643 002
9443452454
benji956@rediffmail.com

COVID-19 RELIEF ACTIVITIES





Summer 2020
St. Norbert Abbey

De Pere, WI

Rev. Michael Brennan, O. Praem.

Along with the worldwide Order, we are excited to begin celebrating the 900th Jubilee Year of the Founding of our Order. Here in De Pere, on the First Sunday of Advent, we will kick off the year with Mass and a Blessing of the New St. Norbert Wall art installation in the Upper Conference Room. Planning is underway for a variety of events during the year, which will include opportunities to celebrate the Order's history and impact, internationally and locally. Activities will consist of liturgies and prayer both at the Abbey and in our parishes, music events, history discussions, special tours of the Abbey Church, community outreach, and more concluding on Sunday, January 9, 2022.

Aside from the 900th preparations, the biggest news since our last update is the impact that COVID-19 has had on community life and ministry. Like your communities, much of our ministry to local Church has been put on hold, canceled, rescheduled, or gone online. Among the many challenges, there have certainly been some blessings: more of us are home more often to participate in the liturgical and communal life of the Abbey; some have even begun to enjoy the opportunity to be more involved in household chores in the kitchen, Church and dining room. Our confreres involved in high school and college ministry continue to discover new ways of instructing, guiding, assessing, and mentoring in a virtual environment. Our pastors are either living in their rectories and/or are limiting their travel to provide "essential services" most often via Livestream. Although we have discovered some new ways to help build the kingdom in this season of a pandemic, most are eager for the return to our ministries among the People of God both inside and outside these Abbey walls.

On Saturday, June 8, 2019, Fr. Jordan Neeck was ordained to the priesthood; we joyfully celebrated his ordination with his loved ones as well as Norbertine confreres, associates, and friends. The celebration continued in June when several confreres joined the Neeck family, friends, and the majority of Fr. Jordan's hometown faithful for a Mass of Thanksgiving at his parish of St. Therese in Phillips, Wisconsin. Fr. Jordan's first assignment has been as theology instructor at Notre Dame Academy and assistant vocation director.

This June (2020) at the conclusion of our chapter meetings, we will celebrate the Feast of St. Norbert and commemorate the ordination anniversaries of Fr. Rod Fenzel (65) & Fr. Xavier Amirtham (25).

In August, during First Vespers of St. Augustine, Michael Tafactory and Danny Allen will be vested in the white habit of St. Norbert. Michael, 30, originally from Egg Harbor, Wisconsin, is a graduate of the University of Texas-Dallas. Since college, he primarily assisted with his father's auto care business; Michael first came to know us through one of our Norbertine Associates. Danny, 24, originally from Benson, North Carolina, is a graduate of Campbell University. Since college, Danny spent time discerning with the Passionists; his spiritual director first suggested the Norbertines to Danny. Both men spent a couple of months at the Abbey in early 2020 as live-in affiliates before being invited to apply for the novitiate. On the day following the vestition of our two novices, Frater Charles will profess Simple Vows. Over this past year, he has served as a part-time theology teacher at Notre Dame Academy. Shortly after his profession, he anticipates traveling to Chicago to begin his theology studies at CTU.

This fall, Fr. Patrick LaPacz will begin full-time studies toward a master's degree in medieval Christian history at Marquette University. Also, this fall, Fr. Michael Brennan will begin a Spiritual Direction Certificate program with the Institute for Priestly Formation; he will travel periodically to Mundelein for some of his coursework.

Since our last update, we have said goodbye to three of our beloved confreres. Fr. Sebastian Robert Schalk, 95, died on October 3; Fr. Brian John Prunty, 83, passed on January 4; followed by Fr. Samuel Donald Jadin, 89, on February 2.

Fr. Seb was born on December 6, 1923, in West Allis, Wisconsin. After serving in the navy during WWII, Fr. Seb graduated Marquette with a degree in electrical engineering (1948). He was vested as a novice (1955), professed Solemn Vows (1960), and was ordained a priest on September 1, 1960. Fr. Seb spent the early part of his career teaching at Abbot Pennings and St. Norbert College. After nearly 20 years of service in the Peruvian missions, where he served as pastor and part-time electrical engineer helping to bring electricity to several of his parishes, he returned to the United States. From 1999 forward, Fr. Seb offered a sacramental ministry in prisons, hospitals, and among the Hispanic population. In May 2014, Fr. Sebastian retired to the Abbey assisting with the sacramental

ministry, regularly participating in community life, scripture study as well as honing his tuba skills.

Fr. Brian was born in New London, Wisconsin, on January 16, 1936. After serving in the Marine Corps, he was vested as a novice in 1957. He professed Solemn Vows in 1962 and was ordained a priest in 1965. After St. Norbert, Fr. Brian earned degrees from DePaul & University of Chicago (1971) and St. Louis University (1982). During the 1960s and 1970s, Fr. Brian served at Catholic schools in Green Bay, Chicago, and Detroit. Beginning in 1983 and for much of the next 20 years, Fr. Brian served as a physician assistant at hospitals, jails, and clinics throughout Chicago. For three of those years, he joined the Peruvian Napo River mission. In 1995, he became associate director of formation and house superior at the Holy Spirit House of Studies. In 2002, he was named pastor and house superior at Old St. Joe's; Fr. Brian continued to teach at SNC until 2010, later retiring (2014) at the Abbey. His quick wit and sense of humor permeated these Abbey halls until his final days.

Fr. Sam was born in Luxemburg, Wisconsin, on February 1, 1931; he was vested as a novice (1948), graduated St. Norbert (1952), and professed Solemn Vows (1953). He was ordained to the priesthood in 1955 while working on his doctorate at the Gregorian in Rome. Over the next 29 years, Fr. Sam served as a faculty member at St. Norbert College, Benedictine University in Illinois; Madonna College and Siena Heights College in Michigan; St. John's and St. Cloud University in Minnesota; and Aquinas Institute of Theology in Iowa. In 1984, Father Sam was appointed House Superior at St. Michael Priory in Green Bay while also teaching adult education throughout diocesan parishes. From 1991 through 2012, he served as chaplain at Holy Family Convent in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. After which, Fr. Sam retired to the Abbey, often sharing a bright and gentle smile with confreres, employees, and loved ones.



Santa Maria de la Vid Report

Albuquerque, NM

Abbot Joel Garner, O. Praem.

After much prayerful discernment, our Abbey requested of John Wester, the Archbishop of Santa Fe, that we be allowed to withdraw from pastoral leadership at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Catholic Community. This was a very difficult decision for us because we love this parish family, and many of us have been honored to serve on the pastoral team over the past 35 years. The new pastor will be a former Dominican whom we know well and who will assume pastoral leadership in a dynamic faith community where lay leadership and multiple ministries are strong. He will also have a very dedicated and talented pastoral staff. We hope to support him in any way that we can with sacramental assistance.

Our decision was fundamentally based on a lack of Norbertine priests at the moment. Father George Pavamkott, the Norbertine Pastor at St. Augustine in Isleta Pueblo for the last decade, is returning to his community in India. Since no other Indian confrère is available to join our Abbey Community at this time, we discerned the need to focus limited energies on nearby parishes with fewer resources, like St. Augustine. In keeping with our mission, Fr. Graham was willing to make the transition from leadership at Holy Rosary to St. Augustine.

Established in 1613, the parish at the Native American Pueblo of Isleta is arguably among the oldest in the United States. Fr. George had the privilege of overseeing a number of historical events at the Pueblo church. In 2011, after years of planning and researching, a major restoration of the church of St. Augustine was completed. In 2012, the faith community celebrated the enshrinement of a statue of St. Kateri Tekakwitha. St. Augustine now hosts the Archdiocesan shrine for St. Kateri in New Mexico. In 2013, St. Augustine parish celebrated its 400th anniversary with the Eucharist, dances, songs, and drumming.

Fr. George's people will miss him and so will his brothers at the Abbey. No one has been more faithful to the Norbertine way of life than Fr. George. His dedication and prayerful presence has touched us all, so it is difficult to say goodbye, but he is happy, and we are happy that the parish will remain under Norbertine pastoral leadership.

As we approach the 900th anniversary of our order in 2021, we are planning for the needs of the people we serve. With the closing of two Catholic retreat houses in Albuquerque in the past few years, we are receiving more

requests than ever for the use of our retreat facilities. In order to meet these requests, we will require additional conference and retreat space, and more overnight accommodations. We have launched a capital campaign in order to address those ministerial needs.

Since the last issue of the Communicator, Brother Patricio Chacon professed simple vows and is graduating from the University of New Mexico with a degree in philosophy this summer. He will attend Catholic Theological Union next year. Alexis Longoria, a graduate in philosophy from St. Bonaventure University in New York, became a first-year novice. Our second-year novice, Lorenzo Romero, is continuing his studies at the University of New Mexico and serving as our sacristan and master of ceremonies. Andres Myers is a postulant and a graduate of Pittsburg State in Kansas. He has been helping at our parishes and is an excellent cook.

For three weeks last fall, our Abbey hosted its 3rd annual Art at the Abbey exhibition. This show, entitled “What is Holiness?” featuring the work of 72 visual artists and eight performance artists.

During the days bridging January and February 2020, the Norbertine community, under the leadership of Fr. Graham Golden, sponsored SANCTUS 2020 at the Hotel Albuquerque. SANCTUS 2020 was a conference that provided opportunities to nearly 300 Catholic youth ranging from 14-18 years old to explore and discern the universal call to holiness on a personal level through liturgies/sacraments, community with other young Catholics, and formation. Events included the dynamic experience of prayer, testimonies and talks, activities, fellowship, and music. Several nationally known speakers and musicians were highlights of the event.

Brother James Owens gave the annual retreat for deacons and their wives in the Archdiocese. As the Pastoral Associate for Parish Outreach at Holy Rosary, he is incredibly involved with the Family Promise movement, serving on the local Family Promise board, and overseeing the Family Promise program at the parish. Holy Rosary is one of 24 faith communities in the Albuquerque area that homeless house families on a regular basis. Each parish or congregation hosts families two or three times a year for a week by providing housing in their facilities and inviting parishioners to provide meals each day. Deacon James is presently working hard to provide a permanent location for the Family Promise movement in Albuquerque.

In February, Fr. Robert Campbell and Fr. Thomas Pulickal assumed new hospital chaplaincy positions. Fr. Bob is now working at Presbyterian

Hospital downtown and Fr. Thomas at Lovelace Hospital downtown. Both facilities are quite near to each other.

Fr. Francis Micek from the Abbey of Strahov in Prague spent much of the year with us on a spiritual sabbatical. He was also extremely helpful in responding to a number of ministerial requests. He returned to his Abbey in late March just prior to the shutdown of international travel.

Our Abbey's Oblates are incredibly involved in several ministerial commitments. Louise Nielsen remains as Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation and Small Christian Communities at Holy Rosary Parish. The parish is one of the few to have maintained several small Christian communities over the years. Louise loves her ministry and is amazingly effective in it. Christina Spahn, the Associate Director of the Master of Theological Studies program of St. Norbert College which has a satellite campus at our Abbey, was very active with Catholic Charities in a welcoming, housing, and feeding asylum seekers for several days when the facilities in El Paso could not accommodate them. Joseph Sandoval, our Communications Director, has recently been appointed Vice President for the Board of the New Mexico Conference of Churches. For the past five years, he has been a course facilitator at the University of Dayton virtual learning community for faith formation.

Fr. Stephen Gaertner, our Prior, was teaching courses in English and Religion at the community college of Central New Mexico. He was also involved in a faculty committee that substantially reworked courses for the general education curriculum. He is presently dealing with a shoulder injury, which has caused him a good deal of pain and hopefully will be addressed through surgery by the time the Communicator arrives.

We all have many stories regarding the “stay at home” directives under which we have been operating for many weeks. But we are particularly proud of our pastors who were able to live stream liturgies, other prayer services, and biblical reflections. This was deeply appreciated by the parishioners. Fr. Peter Muller, Pastor of St. Edwin Parish in the South Valley, has used this time to significantly renovate the interior of his church with the cooperation of many.



The community of the Abbey of Santa Maria de la Vid in August 2019



Father Graham Golden at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary parish in Albuquerque, New Mexico



The three men in formation at the Abbey of Santa Maria de la Vid, from left to right Patricio Chacon, Lorenzo Romero-Ramos, and Alexis Longoria



Father George Pavankott at the parish of St. Augustine on the Isleta Pueblo



COVID-19: A Reflection

*Rev. Robert Campbell, O.Praem.
Santa Maria de la Vid Abbey
Albuquerque, NM*

As a trained, formerly board-certified hospital chaplain, one might think in this time of coronavirus, my life would be impossibly busy. Frustratingly, it is not. My hospital, the largest healthcare provider in the state of New Mexico, has canceled all elective procedures to free up beds for an anticipated surge of COVID patients. In an effort to curtail community spread, no visitors or volunteers are allowed inside. Nor may their pastors and ministers enter, and my own access is tightly controlled. The families of patients cannot sit with their ill loved ones. The effect is surreal. A bustling municipal hospital now has empty halls and beds. An eerie silence has settled in.

The intensive and intermediate care units have been converted into a hot zone for the COVID patients and those suspected of carrying the virus. Nursing stations have been walled in with plexiglass to separate nurses from contamination. Those units are full and bustling, but I cannot see those patients. All non-essential personnel is banned, and in our secular culture, spiritual care is considered a dispensable luxury. Yet when the body is unwell, our souls also suffer. Dying patients need to be prepared for their final passage. Ritual, sacraments, and prayer need to be provided by compassionate ministers. Families need to say goodbye, hug their loved ones, and give a final blessing. All of this is now denied and reasonably so despite my willingness to do so. As a result, we can expect to see profound emotional pain and long-term consequences, perhaps generational in scope. For long after the virus fades, we will need to treat the lingering trauma of survivors, families, and especially stressed overworked medical staff now forced to act as chaplains for sick and dying people.

Last week I stood outside a dying COVID patient's room and prayed from the hallway. Yesterday I celebrated last rites for a non-COVID patient with family members skyeping in for the ritual. I have prayed the prayers of commendation of the dying from the parking lot of a nursing home, the doors barred to outsiders. My sacred oil stocks are divided into single-serve disposable containers; my anointing kit remains outside patient rooms to limit exposure to contamination. Necessity drives adaptation.

As I pull into the complex medical credentials are checked at the entrance by masked security personnel. Temperatures are measured at the front

entrance, and everyone must be masked. I spend the morning visiting non-COVID patients. In a time of the regular pandemic, folks still get sick and need care. Many are afraid to be near the hot zone. Except for medical staff, they are alone. Patients without family present must often interpret confusing medical information on their own. I offer the sacraments, prayers, and compassionate listening. In the afternoons, I reach out by phone to the family members of COVID patients.

For myself and my co-workers, we are in a tunnel, still in the tomb with Jesus awaiting the healing balm of Christ risen from the dead. Our Easter will come as I console myself that God is still in charge no matter what happens to our bodies or our world. I do not believe the coronavirus is some kind of divine punishment. God is not trying to teach us a lesson (although there will be much to learn from our experience). My ministry constantly reminds me that our bodies are clay vessels; they break so easily. We are amazingly fragile creatures, which is why it is so important that we care for each other and help heal each other's wounds. At the moment, we are all scattered, meetings held by Zoom, our faces masked and anonymous, separate. As we move through this, my dream is for my city, nation, and the world to rediscover the blessings of community and being together.

Norbertines do not live in a community out of necessity nor convenience. We choose community as a religious virtue and grace, our path to holiness. As the world deals with and eventually emerges and recovers from this tragedy, Norbertines will have an important part to play to help rebuild the fragile bonds of fraternal *communio* among the people we serve.



Going Beyond Boundaries: Witnessing and Focusing on Life and Dignity of The Human Person

Rev. Xavier Amirtham, O. Praem.

Jackson, MS

Jamtara

“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them what they have done” ---Proverbs 19:17 NIV

Community: Holy Family Church, 820 Forest Avenue, Jackson MS 39206, USA

Members: Fr. Xavier Amirtham, O. Praem., Pastor, Fr. Jeremy Tobin, O. Praem. Resident, Sacramental Minister, Social Justice Activist.

Community Life: Common life is supported with common meals daily and common prayer. We do our own cooking, cleaning, and washing. Our community is supported by the Abbey in De Pere, Wisconsin, under the guidance of Abbot Dane Radecki, O.Praem. During the last Definatory meeting, Abbot Marcus visited our community.

Ministries: Pastoral ministry to the people of Holy Family Church, Jackson Ms. This parish supplies food to 80 plus families every month in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood. Sacramental ministry to St. Stephen Church Magee MS, Prison ministry to the Federal Corrections Complex Yazoo City MS. Chaplain to Carmelite Sisters Jackson MS. Writing and Activism in social justice to various outlets and organizations.

Challenges: We reach out to people of various cultures: African American and Euro American. We Catholics are 2% of the population largely Evangelical Protestant. We give and receive support from other international priests.

Father Jeremy Tobin, O. Praem., wrote, “We Norbertines came to Jackson, Mississippi, in 1990 at the invitation of the late Bishop William Houck. We took up residence at Jackson St. Mary Parish, 653 Claiborne Avenue. In November 2004, we moved into the new priory on Midway Road. Bishop Joseph Latino blessed it. From then till now, more than 15 Norbertines were part of this community.” (Mississippi Catholic, April 11, 2019). One of those priests came to Holy Family Parish Jackson. To serve.

Holy Family, Jackson (MS) Parish was organized on September 4, 1957, because of a decision by Bishop Richard Gerow. Further developments in the surrounding community through 2017 produced two public housing apartment complexes; one senior citizen complex; and one public elementary school all within 500 feet to one mile of the church grounds. Most of the population in the area are Baptist, African American, low to moderate-income, and receive government subsidies.

In 2014, Father Xavier Amirtham, O. Praem., (7th Pastor), was assigned to the Parish, located in northwest Jackson, MS. His focus for the parish was and is linked to one of the five Norbertine key principles - “**Self-emptying service:** a willingness to cede one’s personal advantage for the good of the community, particularly as expressed in the generosity and discipline required to participate in the structures that support community life.” (norbertines.org). Albeit stretching the principle, under his leadership, the

Holy Family Pastoral Council, the Family Finance Council and the parishioners, made a commitment to go beyond the usual community service projects; reach beyond the boundaries of the parish lines and, build on the parish's strategic plan efforts in community/social outreach and witnessing through evangelization (USCCB Road Map 2015-2016.).

In 2017, Holy Family Parish celebrated its 60th Anniversary. That same year, under the leadership and pastoral guidance of Father Xavier, stepping out on faith, the church opened its first Community Food Pantry. Start-up funds were secured for establishing the Holy Family Community Food Pantry through the "Going Beyond Boundaries: Witnessing and Focusing on the Life and Dignity of the Human Person" grant received from the Diocese of Jackson, in 2016. Members of the parish contribute monthly to the sustenance of the Holy Family Community Food Pantry and local USDA products are purchased.

Monthly food distribution began in the Fall of 2017. An average of 40 to 55 families (70-80 individuals) were served through December 2018. The numbers increased in 2019-2020, from an average of 70 to 90 families (108-150 individuals). However, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, February and March 2020 distributions rose to 111 families (158 individuals- mostly senior citizens) and 33 "drop-in" families. The church is working diligently with local food networks in anticipation of more families needing assistance in the months to come. Food shortages are anticipated, and access is limited for the persons served in the Food Pantry. We continue to ask for prayers and seek support for the Holy Family Community Food Pantry. Our mission is to continue a "**Self-emptying service**" as we go beyond boundaries and focus on the life and dignity of the human person. (Compiled and Edited by Dr. Corinne Anderson)



COVID-19
A Reflection from India
Father Mathew T. O. Praem.
Jamtara

*“The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armor against Fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings;
Scepter and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spa — (By James Shirley)*

Corona Virus, popularly known as COVID 19, has been rampaging the world in all spheres of human life: Health, Economy, Religion, and Spirituality since December 2019 unabated, challenging the medical and scientific communities to put up any defense against it. A world that seemed so secure with its cultural, economic, and scientific achievements has fallen in a wink of an eye, like a pack of cards. The global village has been turned into a “huge cemetery,” “the land of silence” with “dreamless heads,” yet to find a place to bury the dead. The wind of death blew from “Wuhan” of China, the land of Atheism and Communism to the heart of Christianity, Italy. No one knows for sure of the origin of this Virus, whether it was “manmade” or “nature made.”

It is interesting to note that “Corona,” as its name stands to mean “Crown,” is still used to place on the head of the dead body, mainly by the Syrian Christian, who was born at Christmas 19 and spread out her canopy of shroud by Easter 20. For the first time in the history of the Church, the Churches were closed down, and Easter could not be celebrated with the Faithful. During the untold miseries of mankind, many social and political scientists come out with their strategies to deal with the aftermath of this tragedy, hoping against hope, in the spheres of the geopolitical and geo-economic arena. It is high time that the Church leaders should think about the “geo-spiritual” aspect, which in my reflection is the “core of the present crisis.”

The role of Virus in human life

Virus is a word of Latin origin from which the English “virulent” has a root. The existence of the Virus is as old as humanity itself. Where there is “Life, (Vita/viva,)”, there will be “virus.” It is like day and night. We

cannot think of or conceive an idea of “light” without any idea of “darkness.” If “light is powerful,” the darkness will be vanished and vice-versa. “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness could not overcome it,” Jn.1,3) In a similar way, if the “life force” or “immunity” is powerful, the virus will not be able to “enter into our cells.”

In this sense, “virus is the double-edged sword.” Immunity in the body is not made in a day as the maxim goes, “Rome is not built in a day.” The immunity of the body is ever in a fight with the virus from the environment. Hence, the Virus is the agent of death (sin, Satan) and Immunity, the agent of Life. This “Life Force” is tested and proved in the presence of viruses. In this sense, the Virus is a friend of man. But, when the “evil force of virus” is more powerful than that of the “life force,” Virus becomes victorious as the agent of death. Lifeforce is nothing but “Love,” a source of “positive energy,” and the virus is “Negative energy.” “Those who live in Love live in God.” (Letter of John), for “God is Love,” “Jesus further said, “I am the life of the world,” and “I came that you may have life and life abundantly.”

As a matter of fact, “Immunity of the body” is not merely the result of nutritious food, a clean environment, and physical exercise; rather, the virus surrounding has a big role to play. I noticed during my college days in Mumbai those ‘rag-pickers’ in the slum, despite exposed to dirty environments, seldom were affected with any diseases. I, on the other, if ever, ate a little food or water from outside, my stomach got upset, for I was too used to eat clean food and drink boiled water. With the slogan of “Swatch Bharat,” the slums are today raised into flats. Too much cleanliness is as dangerous as too much dirt. There should be a healthy balance between dirt and cleanliness, order, and disorder. What a concept of order of Beauty without disorder?? In other words, whether health, economy, or politics, there should be an “Opposition,” which does not prevail in our socio-political life under the totalitarian reign or Majocracy. (Democracy of, for and by the Majority) For a better “Biological Immunity: the body needs ever in a fight or struggle with the opposing force. In this sense, Darwin is true to discover the theory of ‘Evolution,’ which is based on the ‘Survival of the fittest.’

It is the same case with ‘Spiritual Immunity’. Many a temptation will be there in our surrounding especially in our era of Advertisement, communication technologies, and Lifestyles. If our spiritual Immunity is poor, the ‘Techie-virus’ will capture our hearts, even without producing any symptoms, just as the Corona works in the majority in India. Here

comes the importance of wearing a “spiritual mask” of being “ever vigilant,” not to lead us to “temptations.”

As we know, there is too much of “social cleanliness” in the Western countries, including the U.S. So, their body is not used to fighting many viruses around. If any powerful virus enters the body, it will subdue them faster comparing to those living in Asia or Africa.

Spiritual Immunity of the Church

While the Nations of the world care so much for the physical Immunity, the mental immunity of man is not taken care of. And no wonder, crime, sexual aberrations, suicide, and mental conditions are rampant. The ‘Mental Immunity’ helps a person to “resist” any “crisis” that threatens his Spiritual existence. We see how Jesus develops such “mental immunity” to “resist” in the Temptation story in Luke, prior to his public ministry. The mental Immunity to “hold on” in the midst of impending threat, in the religious language, it could be termed, “Faith or Confidence” and hence the expression, “self- confidence.” Love lit the fire of “positive energy,” which one receives from the parents in the childhood that in later life becomes the “life force” or “spiritual Immunity.” Hence, St. Paul says, “Faith, Hope, and Love and the Greatest of these is LOVE’. The role of Religion is to “foster this love into maturity” to make one “stand on his own feet” when the lifeboat is tossed on the sea.

The Nations of the world, often, not understanding the term ‘Secularism’ in its original meaning, gives the least importance to the “spiritual growth of man.” On the other, they try to subdue Religion and spirituality, and if possible, subvert the very religious institutions as in the case of China today. While they uphold “secularism” as the Bible, the very Bible is burned and symbol of the cross, and for that case, any other religious symbols are removed. As a result, the young generation grows up in ‘materialism devoid of the spirit of God’ and their “indulgence in goods and services” to produce “maximum pleasure”(hedonists) renders the earth and ecology, the Himalayan peak of filth and dirt, giving rise to all “kinds of Virus” with its mutational genre.

The very etymology of ‘Secularism’ on the other has originated from the word “secular” (Latin)

which means “lasting forever” or “forever and ever,” as used in the Latin Rite Mass. As the word stands for, it is the duty of the governments to “put the spirit of God in the material development of the state in such a way that they may not interfere and respect the freedom of religion is protected

and strengthened. For man, unlike animals, is composed of “body(soma), mind (psyche) and soul (nous). It is a wrong belief that if the body is developed by nutritional food and exercise, the immunity could be developed. The state gives more importance for the development of the body only through its “welfare state” while neglecting the “mind and soul.” These days, due to anti-social behaviors of men and the increasing number of suicide and mental diseases, some measures are taken to alleviate the mind through mental clinics, counseling, and change of approach in the education of the young, etc. Till now, the spiritual development (Soul), which is the “core” of human integrity, is neglected.

As I already mentioned above, the nature of COVID-19, as a “double sharpened sword,” may deviate from the faith and love that one had or may “drawback to God with more faith and intensity,” depending upon the “spiritual immunity of man.” The one whose spiritual immunity is not mature enough may question the very existence of God and the Church. The Church that taught “obligation of Sunday Mass” and “Easter Services” as an “absolute value” may find it hard to convince the Faithful of the very “Immunity of the Church.” The Church may hinge on the words of Jesus, “Man is not made for Law, but Law is made for man,” which may not satisfy a disturbed mind.

If you search a bit more deeply, COVID-19 taught man “to sacrifice his liberty that he enjoyed until the eve of the Corona outbreak, to create a new “space to save his fellow man’s life” which is a society of “individualism,” he was not ready for. The people in many European countries were not ready to accommodate this intense “Locked down” and hence, in the Netherlands, the government put it as “Intelligent locked down,” leaving the choice to the public. Such was the depth of “individualism.” Jesus said, “No love is greater than that a man lay down his life for his friends.” In this sense, “physical distancing” (not social distancing) brought about an “interior social communion.”

Corona had no discrimination on the basis of caste, color, gender, creed, or social status. It could affect the Pope, Prince, or Prime Minister. It followed the principle of “socialism” and “true Catholicism,” which both the Church and the Nations of the world failed in many respects. Of course, no utopian egalitarianism is possible in Church and society as each man is created ‘unique,’ and hence, the difference is a reality to be appreciated, yet an intrinsic egalitarianism of being children of God is to be practiced.

In the context of Corona and many more pandemics and natural calamities in the days to come, that may diminish the spiritual immunity of man, the

Church in its catechism should strengthen and deepen the Faith. Jesus said, “those who try to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for his sake will find it.” Further, he said, “unless a grain of wheat dies and decays, it cannot produce any fruit...”. The modern generation seeks for a lifestyle without being able to carry any Cross. It is only by “carrying the cross, the spiritual, mental, and physical immunity is strengthened.”

Church is not merely an Institutional hierarchy, rather the “embodiment of the mystical body of Christ bound up in LOVE OF GOD AND LOVE OF NEIGHBOR, a servant hierarchy with her Royal Spirituality of simplicity, humility, justice, sharing and all the values of the kingdom that Jesus lived and stood for. May the Risen Lord help the people of God and governments of the Nations of the world to revive, renew and strengthen the “integral immunity of man” viz. body- mind-spirit to face the “crosses” coming on the way.

(NB. “majocracy” is a personal coinage which you may not find in any dictionary)



Norbertines and Beer: A Tradition.

Rev. Andrew D. Ciferni, O. Praem.

Daylesford

Werkgroep Norbertijner Geschiedenis in de Nederlanden. Bijdragen van de contactdag 2017.

Since 1991 Belgian and Dutch historians, both Norbertine and laity, professional academics and interested *amateurs* of Norbertine history in the Low Countries have been meeting annually for one day focused on aspects of our history in those countries. The papers given are later published for the participants and other interested parties.

The latest collection is from the 2017 gathering dealing with *The Brewing of Beer in Brabant until the time of the French Revolution with a special look at Norbertine Abbeys* (no. 27 in the series).

The first paper, authored by Erik Aerts, deals with aspects of the development of beer brewing in Brabant from the Middle Ages until the end of the eighteenth century; a very technical presentation dealing with the

switch from *gruitbier* (beer flavored with bitter and aromatic herbs, botanicals, and/or some fruits) to *hopsbier* and on the grades of alcohol in the final product: 6% drunk on special occasions; 3 – 3.5% for daily use; and 0.5 – 2% “klein bier” (small, little) drunk by the lowest social groups. Only the last two paragraphs mention the brewing of beer in Norbertine Abbeys (Tongerlo and Averbode).

The second presentation (with fine color illustrations and photographs), the work of Kristiaan Magnus, is a deep dive into the archives of Park Abbey, whose brewery building still stands but for other uses.

The third paper treats the brewing of beer by Averbode Abbey. The author, Herman Janssens, O. Praem., Archivist at Averbode, gives a summary history of beer brewing at the Abbey from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries. His presentation of material concerning the brewing of beer outside the Abbey by pastors of the Abbey paints a picture of extensive beer culture.

Janssens closes his paper with a short account of the Abbey’s return to brewing after the restoration of Abbey life following the dispersal of the community at the end of the eighteenth century. The copper kettles used for that enterprise were taken by the Germans during the First World War, and brewing was not resumed until the installation of a microbrewery in 2016.

The fourth and final paper from the 2017 gathering of the Werkgroep deals with the production and use of beer in the Norbertine Brabant Abbeys at the end of the eighteenth century. The author, Marc Libert, bases his work on the study of taxes on beer paid by Norbertine communities at that time. Beer consumption was not only within the Abbeys but was also freely and generously supplied to others, e.g., communities of cloistered nuns. There the annual consumption of the beverage seems to have been higher among Norbertine canonesses!



Poetry from our Sisters
Bethlehem Priory of Saint Joseph
Tehachapi, CA

Where has My Beloved Gone?

A stream of tears moistens a rock
whose coldness, hardness can offer no consolation
but consolation is not sought

He is.

Earth has no answer
its elements, beautiful as they are,
are only traces

What are they compared to the Reality?

Already she has touched Him, kissed His feet,
dried them with her hair.

Now His Face is her only desire,
the vision of His Face

glory,

glorious morning,

Heaven responds:

turning, she hears her name...

it is the Master of her heart,

calling

The Lord Remains Faithful to His Promise Forever

I will send you the Holy Spirit,

Hidden and gentle as a dove.

He will rejoice over you with gladness

And renew you in His Love.

He will help you to remember

And trust **My** promises to you.

Cling to these with all your faith.

Behold, I make all things new.

I will love you freely

And heal your defection.

So that **My** joy may be in you

And you share **My** resurrection.

Your name is written on **My** palms.

I will never forget **My** Bride,

My merciful covenant I will never forsake,

Flowing from **My** wounded side.

So lift up your heart; do not be afraid.

I have numbered all your hairs.

I'm with you in tribulation.

All your burdens I will share.

I'll make all work for your good,

For nothing is impossible to **Me**.

My mercies I'll renew each morning,

So great is **My** fidelity.

As a father carries his child,

On your journey, so will I.

My compassionate gaze on your miseries.

You're already glorified in **My** eyes.

Fear not, I have redeemed you.

I call your name; you're **Mine**.

I will bring you up to the heights,

Your feet as swift as hinds'.

I will take you to **Myself**,

So you'll be where I am.

With **Me** on **My** holy mountain,

Where the wolf's the guest of the lamb.

There I'll be your great reward,

Together in endless praise.

We'll rest and see, see and love

On the eighth eternal day.

There **My** beauty will be yours.

I'll make you integrated and whole.

But you need not wait for then to start,

As Heaven's already in your soul.

And the sister by your side each day

At prayer, rest, or labor

Whatever's done to her, is done to **Me**.

Heaven's in your neighbor.

So take up your Cross each day,

Co-redeeming the world with **Me**.

For loving and suffering are but one,

Mothering souls on Calvary.

Then suffering will be no more.

From your eyes, I'll wipe every tear.
You will see **Me** face-to-face
And not dimly in a mirror.

In the freedom of the sons of God,
The Communion of saints in Heaven
Will live **My** Trinitarian life of love
Forever and ever. Amen.



From Muston Canonry
Saint Mary's Priory, England
Rt. Rev. Andrew Smith, O. Praem.

Dear Confreres. It is good to take part in this new way of communicating with The Communicator. Unfortunately, we forgot to put an entry into the last edition. Last October, we had the privilege of our Abbot General Emeritus Thomas, giving us our very excellent Annual Retreat. Also, in October Fr. Martin, our long-standing Provisor, was re-elected to the Committee of our national Religious Bursars' Conference. It is some time since he was its chairman. He is now trying to get used to meetings through social media. In November Fr. Thomas traveled south to the Visitation Monastery in Waldron, who at that time has no resident chaplain, to celebrate Mass for them during their annual retreat. The sisters prayed Thomas into the community some 24 years ago. At the end of November Fr. Thomas returned home in Hastings on the south coast for his sister-in-law's surprise 60th birthday party, but very sadly, his mother suddenly died that day. She had been ill for several years with dementia. The funeral was not until January at which Fr. Andrew preached the eulogy.

The Provisor of the Order, Fr. Klass Fongers of Essenburg/Berne, came to visit us in December. He, like AGE Thomas, is one of the legal trustees of our property. He came by car and so was able to bring us a selection of Norbertine beers from our Belgian and Dutch Abbeys. Leffe beer can be found in most supermarkets.

Lent started well in our parishes as well as the priory except for Fr. Ian, who had to spend a week in Scarborough General Hospital. In March Fr.

Andrew attended a Diocesan Clergy Day on Safeguarding. He had planned to go with friends for a few nights to Vienna but with the coronavirus troubles growing the airline canceled the flights; it was then planned to go to Alnwick where there is a famous castle and the site of a pre-Reformation Norbertine Monastery, but that too got canceled as the situation got worse. Now we are all locked down. Because three of us are 70+ with underlying health conditions, we are confined to the Priory as required by the Government and by Fr. Thomas, who is also a registered nurse. Also, in March, we obtained a stained-glass window of St. Augustine for our chapel. Up till now, we have had no image of our Rule maker at the Priory. The window is one of the 19th Century and is in keeping with the Priory. We intend, when able, to have it inscribed and dedicated to our 900 years of foundation. The virus has also caused the postponement of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Priesthood of Frs. Martin (May 10th.) and Prior Andrew (May 21st.). We shall have in-house parties on both days and celebrations with clergy, religious, friends, and parishioners when the virus permits. On weekdays we celebrate a Holy Hour in our chapel asking the Lord to keep us, our friends, relatives, confreres, parishioners free from the virus. Like us all, we await in prayer and hope for the time when we can continue to celebrate with and for the people of God. May we all keep well and safe.

We attach some pictures of the Priory and our garden.



Beautiful Garden at Muston Priory



Chapel at Muston



Garden at Muston Priory



Saint Augustine Stained Glass at Muston Priory



Chelmsford Canonry

*Saint Phillip Priory, England
Rt. Rev. Hugh Allan, O. Praem.*

Our little chronicle began in March 2019 when we welcomed the pilgrimage statue from the shrine of Our Lady of Fatima. This is a replica of the statue in the shrine, blessed by St John Paul II, and it travels around the world, spreading devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. It was a faith-filled day, and there was much waving of handkerchiefs.

During March, we also had the final of our Lent Talks for 2019 on "Prayer and Scripture" given by Fr John Hemer MHM. He is an excellent speaker and has a deep love and knowledge of the Scriptures. The month ended with Fr Pius giving a retreat to the "Catholic Man UK" group. This is a new venture in the UK to encourage Christian witness amongst men. It recently received the blessing of the Bishop's Conference, and Fr Pius is its national chaplain.

After the joy and beauty of Easter, Fr Hugh headed off to Valladolid in Spain for the Spring Meeting of the Bishop's Conference. Valladolid is an "English seminary Abroad," one of the many that were set up during the times of persecution to train men to return to serve on the "English Mission." It was an especially important week since the whole week

centered on listening to and speaking with survivors and victims of abuse. It was a difficult week for all who took part, but an important moment. This is the first time that a National Bishop's Conference has met collectively with survivors.

At the start of May, Fr Stephen headed off to Lourdes with the Order of Malta. He is now the organizer of the British pilgrimage to Lourdes. It is a lot of work, but a rewarding time for both helpers and the sick, all pilgrims together.

Later in the month, Fr Pius and Fr Hugh attended a celebration Mass in Nottingham Cathedral for 175 years of the cathedral. Fr Pius is a native son of Nottingham and, when the Order first returned to England, it was to serve parishes in the diocese of Nottingham. Many diocesan priests were incredibly pleased to see Norbertines back in the diocese, even if just for the day.

In June, we ran a training day for catechists in our deanery, aided by the Dominican Sisters of Lymington, where our Fr Richard is the chaplain. The next day, we celebrated our annual Corpus Christi procession. This becomes larger and better attended every year. We have well over 600 people processing around the local neighbourhoods, witnessing to our Eucharistic Lord. It is a beautiful and happy occasion.

At the end of June, Fr Stephen was installed as a Magistral Chaplain to the Order of Malta. Fr Hugh attended the Mass, representing all the confreres. The month ended with Br Gildas finishing his term as a seminary, and he returned home full time to the Priory for the summer.

The headteacher of our parish school retired at the end of term, so there were many celebrations for her and to wish her well in her retirement. The month ended with our annual pilgrimage to Walsingham. It is always a happy day, but this year, Fr Hugh was "kidnapped" by EWTN for an interview. Fr Hugh was told it would only be a few minutes. Two and half hours later, he returned to the pilgrimage group just as we prepared to head back home. The interview was later shown on EWTN as part of their "Walsingham Stories" series. Unknown to Fr Hugh (and perhaps the whole Order), EWTN had decided to promote him to "Abbot General," at least that is what the credits of the programme said. We can all breathe a deep sigh of relief that this is not the case. In July, we also welcomed our local Bishop on Parish Visitation and Confirmation. He is a good friend to the community, and it is always good to welcome him to our home.

In August, Fr Hugh preached at the Ordinariate celebrations in London for the feast of the Assumption. Their main church is dedicated to Our Lady's Assumption. At the end of August, we had our Canonry Retreat, which this year was preached by Fr John Saward. It was an excellent retreat, and we benefited from his talks and his company. After the retreat, Br Gildas was installed as an acolyte, another step on his journey to the priesthood.

Shortly after this, Fr Hugh set sail for the small island of Tristan da Cunha. It is one of the island parishes he looks after in the south Atlantic. It is the most remote inhabited island in the world. It takes around nine days to get there. A population of 263 people cling to the side of this active volcano far from anywhere. It has a thriving little parish looked after by three catechists. During his visit, Fr Hugh celebrated First Holy Communion and Confirmations for the islanders.

In October, we joined with the religious sisters who live in mid-Essex for a celebration of religious life. The main event of October for the church in our country was the canonisation of John Henry Newman. Fr Pius attended the canonisation in Rome and enjoyed a weekend in Rome when the English seemed to have taken over the whole city.

November began with the usual Masses for the dead and blessing of graves around the cemeteries in our parishes. After this, Fr Hugh gave a weekend retreat to the seminarians at Oscott Seminary. In November each year, we celebrated Quarante Ore, and, as always, it was a beautiful time of prayer and peace in our hectic lives.

December dawned upon us with the usual rounds of nativity plays and carol services. In January, we welcomed Fr Cadoc home for his Christmas visit. It is always good to have him back in the house.

January saw the final completion of a booklet we have prepared as part of our contribution to the jubilee year of the Order on the Life of St Norbert. It is going to be published by the Catholic Truth Society in the UK. It is an abridged version of the life written by Abbot Martin Geudens. Also, thanks to a very generous benefactor, we have commissioned Stuffless to carve two new statues of St Augustine and St Norbert. We look forward to their completion in time for the jubilee celebrations.

In February, Fr Hugh was off on his travels again, this time to the island of St Helena. It is a beautiful island paradise, thousands of miles from anywhere. Its primary fame is as the island prison for Napoleon after his defeat at Waterloo.

In March, a group of confreres visited our eldest confrere, Fr Michael, in his nursing home in Manchester.

Then came the "lockdown" resulting from the COVID 19 pandemic. As the government closed churches and public Masses were suspended, the confreres had a frantic few days traveling around all the homes of our parishes to distribute information on what to do and how to contact us, etc. during this time.

We are the only active priests in the area; all the other clergy are either over 70 or have an illness that makes them vulnerable to the virus. So, all of the confreres have made regular visits to the local hospital, swathed in PPE, to visit the sick and the dying. It is a humbling privilege to be able to do this during this terrible time.

Our chronicle ends with the devastating news of Fr Cadoc's death. His obituary has been sent to all the houses of the Order, but we would like to end with a few lines in tribute to our confrere and friend.

"There is no one quite like Fr Cadoc. Fr Cadoc has always been a faithful and kind confrere. His unflinching cheerfulness and his delight in the absurd were always a source of comfort and strength. His great love of snuff tobacco provided so many opportunities for the mortification of his confreres. There are so many wonderful stories of his life. He was always a man of strong opinions and forthright in his views. Yet, like Bartholomew in the gospel, he was a man completely without guile. His greatest desire is that we would remember him as a faithful priest and a true son of Mary Immaculate. Fortified by the rites of Holy Mother Church, Fr Cadoc went home to the Lord on 1st May 2020, a "First Friday" dedicated to the Sacred Heart, the feast of St Joseph, and the first day of the Marian month of May. This sums up his life and his priesthood." May he rest in peace.



The Premonstratensian Monasteries at the Brotherhood of Valladolid in 1282

By Dr. Teresa Angulo¹⁶

Translated and Annotated by Dr. Rosemary Sands
Saint Norbert College, De Pere, WI

Introduction

The following is a translation of a brief article written by Dr. Teresa Angulo regarding the importance of the Premonstratensian Order in 13th century Spain as evidenced by a large number of Norbertine signatories on a historically significant document. This document was drafted at a meeting of the “Hermandad” in Valladolid in 1282, which was a brotherhood of abbots from Cluniac, Cistercian and Premonstratensian monasteries in the kingdoms of Castile and Leon. The meeting of the brotherhood was called by don Sancho, second son of Alfonso X, who was in the midst of a bitter battle with his father and nephews in his bid to be named heir to the throne after the death of his older brother.

To avoid confusion, the translator’s footnotes are shown in boldface.

Translation

In the middle ages, the Premonstratensian Hispanic Circary was headed by the monasteries of Santa María de Retuerta and Santa María de La Vid¹⁷, whose expansion, brought about through the foundation of daughter houses, was considerable and helps to explain the Order’s importance in the Castilian Monarchy. This is confirmed by the “brotherhood” of Valladolid, promoted by don Sancho in 1282 among monasteries in the region of Castile and León, which brought together Benedictines, Cistercians, and Premonstratensians. In this group, the largest number of abbots corresponded to the Premonstratensians. The importance of the Premonstratensian Circary and of the cohesion of its monasteries is illustrated by the fact that, from the beginning of the 13th century, the Norbertines collectively addressed the Pope, who responded to them as “dilecti filii abbates et conventus premonstratenses ordinis in Hispania existentes”.¹⁸

¹⁶ Dr. Teresa Angulo Fuertes earned her doctorate in History from the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia in Madrid, Spain in 2015. Her dissertation was entitled “El Monasterio Premonstratense de Santa María de La Vid (Burgos): Siglos XII-XV. Dr. Angulo died unexpectedly in April of 2016.

¹⁷ Although Retuerta and La Vid were founded more or less contemporaneously, Retuerta always had primacy over La Vid, thus the head of the Order in Spain was Retuerta.

¹⁸ AHN, Clero, carp. 378, n° 19. AHN. Clero, carp. 378, n° 20

The end of the reign of Alfonso X (Alfonso the Wise), was determined by the death of his first son and heir, don Fernando de la Cerda, in 1275, which gave rise to the problem of succession faced by his second-born son, Sancho, against Sancho's nephews, the offspring of Fernando¹⁹. Adding to this was the public dissatisfaction with the condition of the public treasury, which had been diminished by the excessive outlays of Alfonso in his attempt to be recognized as emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, the expenses of the court, and Alfonso's largesse. All of this led to the creation of brotherhoods or coalitions of cities, nobles, prelates, monasteries, councils and townships in defense of their rights, and regional codes of law recognizing the government of Sancho in opposition to that of his father. Within this context, a general assembly was held in Valladolid in April 1282, at which those present decided to depose King Alfonso X in favor of don Sancho²⁰.

Four documents from this assembly are preserved; among them is a letter of brotherhood²¹ signed by abbots from Cluniac, Cistercian, and Premonstratensian monasteries located in the kingdoms of León and Castile. The letter was signed by 39 abbots: eight Cluniacs, fourteen Cistercians, and eighteen Premonstratensians²²

The Premonstratensian abbots who signed the document were from:
Santa María La Real de Aguilar de Campóo (Palencia)
Santa María de Retuerta (Valladolid)
Santa María de La Vid (Burgos)
San Pelayo de Cerrato (Palencia)

¹⁹ After the death of Ferdinand, Sancho claimed to be the heir, in opposition to Alfonso's wishes that one of his grandsons inherit the throne. Upon the death of Alfonso X, Sancho took control of the kingdom and was crowned king.

²⁰ GONZÁLEZ JIMÉNEZ, Manuel: *Documentación e itinerario de Alfonso X*, Sevilla, 2012, p. 641.

²¹ La fecha de este documento varía según el autor al que acudamos. Fernández Flórez lo toma de ESCALONA (*Historia de Sahagún*, apénd. III, 616-617, escr. CCLXIV) y fecha en 2 de mayo de 1281 ("Actum est hoc VIº nonas madii, anno Domini Mº CCº LXXXº Iº") mientras que Fernández Martín lo toma del Tumbo del Monasterio de San Millán de la Cogolla (fol. 243) y fecha en 2 de mayo de 1282. Señala este autor que M. Sangrador (*Historia de la muy noble y leal ciudad de Valladolid desde la más remota antigüedad hasta la muerte de Fernando VII*, Valladolid, 1851, t. I, p. 105) se equivoca al fechar esta asamblea en 1281. Siguiendo el itinerario del infante Sancho que Manuel González Jiménez establece el su obra, el año de la data ha de ser 1282.

FERNÁNDEZ MARTÍN, Luis: "La participación de los monasterios en la "Hermandad" de los reinos de Castilla, León y Galicia (1282-1284)" en *Hispania Sacra*, 25 (1972), pp. 9-11. FERNÁNDEZ FLÓREZ, José Antonio: *Colección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún*, V, nº 1824, pp. 427-428.

²² The monasteries of Brazacorta and Fresnillo were absent from this reunion. (Translator's note: These two monasteries were female filials of La Vid, in which case they would not have had their own representation at the council, but rather would have been represented by the abbot of La Vid.

San Pelayo de Hermellis²³ (Palencia)
 Santa Cruz de Monzón (o de Ribas) (Palencia)
 Nuestra Señora de la Asunción de Villoria de Órbigo (León)
 Villamejor²⁴ (Burgos)
 Santa María de Villamediana (Burgos)
 San Cristóbal de Ibeas de Juarros (Burgos)
 Nuestra Señora de Bujedo de Casa de Pajares²⁵ (Burgos)
 San Saturnino de Medina del Campo (Valladolid)
 San Leonardo en Alba de Tormes
 San Miguel del Monte o de Gros (Zamora)
 Sancti Spiritus de Ávila
 Nuestra Señora de la Caridad de Ciudad Rodrigo (Salamanca)
 Santa María de los Huertos de Medina del Campo (Valladolid) o de Segovia?²⁶

The strength of the order of Prémontré is reflected in the large number of abbots who attended the meeting in Valladolid. The motives of the brotherhood were to achieve a pact of mutual defense in order to preserve their privileges and avoid the extraction of tributes. In this document, the representatives pledged "... advice, help, and favor to preserve our rights, immunities, liberties, privileges, indulgences, usages, and good practices for just reform, according to the interest of our Order, mutually with our persons and our goods...". In this document, don Sancho is referred to as "eldest son and heir," and the abbots acknowledge that the power had passed into his hands²⁷. The immediate consequence was a war that lasted two years until the death of Alfonso X in April of 1284.



²³ San Pelayo de Arenillas

²⁴ San Miguel de Villamayor de Treviño

²⁵ Nuestra Señora de Bujedo de Candepajares

²⁶ This must be in reference to Santa María de los Huertos in Segovia because Santa María de los Huertos in Valladolid was a foundation of sisters and thus would not have had its own representation at this council.

²⁷ "...ex edicto generali conuocati per illustrem infantem domnum Sanchium, maiorem filium et heredem illustrissimi regis Castellae et Legionis, Toleti, Galleciae, Yspalis, Corduuae, Murciae, Iahenis et Algaruii apud Uallem Oleti in simul congregati..." FERNÁNDEZ FLÓREZ, José Antonio: *Colección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún*, V, nº 1824, pp. 427.

Spanish Homily Helps from Norbertine Spain of 1670

Br. Terrence Lauerman, O. Praem.

Saint Norbert Abbey

The old Norbertine Spanish Circary produced some significant spiritual writers and preachers such as Luis Tineo de Morales, José Esteban Noriega, Manuel Herrera de Tordesillas, and Juan de Estrada Gijón. Juan de Estrada Gijón was perhaps the most prolific and well-known Norbertine composer of sermons as well as a famous court preacher in Madrid.

Mini Biography of Juan de Estrada Gijón, O. Praem.:

1. Professed of Santa María de los Huertos, Segovia
2. Doctor of Theology
3. Abbot of San Norberto, Salamanca (1654-57)*
4. Abbot of San Norberto, Madrid (1672-75)*
5. Court Preacher for Felipe IV (reign 1621-1640) and Carlos II (reign 1665-1700).
6. Died, Jan 17, 1679
7. Buried at San Norberto, Madrid

Other Writings of the Author:

Published Works:

1. Sermones varios (Madrid, 1661)
2. Panegyricos predicados a diversos assumptos (Madrid, 1666)
3. Arte de predicador la palabra de Dios (Madrid, 1667)
4. Sermones para los Días de Semana Santa (Madrid, 1670)
5. Sermones para las fiestas de la Purísima Virgen y Madre de Dios María Nuestra Señora (Madrid, 1672)

Unpublished Manuscripts:

1. La respuesta que en nombre y de orden del Rey D. Felipe IV dio a la Serenísima República de Venecia sobre el culto de la Inmaculada Concepción de nuestra Señora
2. Contra Judíos

Recently from an antiquarian bookstore online, I was able to find an original printed copy of one of his extensive publications available for purchase by the Center for Norbertine Studies. Financing of the publication in 1670 was made possible by Gabriel de León, a local book merchant. Exclusive publishing rights were granted to Francisco Nieto y

Salcedo. The language of the book is archaic Spanish with numerous commentaries and Scriptural references in Latin. There is no indication by library seal or hand notations as to where this book has resided for the past several centuries. Now it is in the collection of St. Norbert College Archives: 252 Es8s 1670.

Partial details of the book and purchase:

SERMONES PARA LAS FIESTAS MAYORES DE QUARESMA CONSAGRADOS A LA PROTECCION DE NUESTRO REVERENDO PADRE D. JUAN DE SALCES Y QUEVEDO, Abbot of the Convent de Nuestra Señora de Retuerta y Reforming General of the Order of St. Norbert, Madrid: Imprenta de Francisco Nieto y Salcedo, 1670, 22x16x4, 512 pages, text in columns, initial wood engraving, cover in parchment. Purchased from: Librería Antiquaria Catedral (Tarragona, Spain), US \$379.02

Approval for the publication was given by:

1. Fray Tomás de Avellaneda, Premonstratensian: Professed of la Vid, Abbot of la Vid (1636-39, 1642-45)*, Abbot of Espíritu Santo, Ávila (1652-54)*, Abbot of Santa María de los Huertos, Segovia (1639-42)*, One of the four masters general of the Order, and diocesan examiner of the Archdiocese of Toledo, Developer of the 2,000-volume library of San Norberto, Madrid
2. Fray Martín de Guerrero, Franciscan: General visitorator of his Order
3. Padre Pedro de Quirós, Cleric Minor: Poet and provost of a house of his Order in Salamanca
4. Fray Antonio Bonifaz, Premonstratensian: Doctor of Theology, Reforming General (1666-69) and Abbot of La Vid (1651-54, 1657-60, and 1663-66)*
5. Gerónimo Moreno, Notary: Member of the Chamber of the Council

Dedication:

As can be noted from the description above, the sermons were dedicated to Juan de Salces y Quevedo, the Reforming Abbot General of the Abbey of Retuerta (1660-1663). This Reforming General had also been selected repeatedly by General Chapter as Abbot of San Joaquín, Madrid (1659-60, 1663-66, 1672-75, 1678-81, and 1690-1693)±. He had also served as Secretary-General, Definitor, and Vicar General of the Spanish

Circary. He originally was a vested and professed member of Abbey of San Norberto, Valladolid.[±]

Dedicatory Prologue:

On pages 1-7, in expected flowery baroque style in the dedicatory introduction, Juan de Estrada y Gijón sought to ingratiate himself with Juan Salces y Quevedo, the Reforming General of the Spanish Circary. He polished the rhetorical apple by calling him a perfect superior, an illustrious grandee; a meritorious person noted for public virtue and prudence, etc. He signed the dedication as your humble servant and subject. No doubt, this is the expected obsequious language needed to get a major printing approved and validated in 17th-century Spanish religious circles.

Errata's:

There is a half-page of errata's listed before the main text. The corrections were prepared by Licenciado D. Francisco Forero de Torres.

Sermon Titles:

Although the collection of sermons is principally directed to the Lenten season, the four Sundays of Advent are also included in a non-paginated initial section of applications of 4 to 7 paragraphs in length for sermons from the First Sunday of Advent to Easter Monday.

1. Miércoles de Cenizas (Wednesday: Ashes) (Pages 1-29)
2. Viernes Enemigos (Friday: Enemies) (Pages 29-53)
3. Domingo Tentación (Sunday: Temptation) (Pages 53-83)
4. Miércoles Señales (Wednesday: Signs) (Pages 83-112)
5. Viernes Piscina (Friday: Pool) (Pages 113-144)
6. Domingo Transfiguración (Sunday: Transfiguration) (Pages 145-175)
7. Miércoles Subida a Jerusalén (Wednesday: Up to Jerusalem) (Pages 176-202)
8. Viernes Viña (Friday: Vine) (Pages 203-226)
9. Domingo Mudo (Sunday: Mute) (Pages 226-259)
10. Miércoles Laboratorio (Wednesday: Washing) (259-298)
11. Viernes Samaritana (Friday: Samaritan) (Pages 298-327)
12. Domingo Los Panes (Sunday: Bread) (Pages 328-368)
13. Miércoles El Ciego (Wednesday: Blind man) (Pages 369-407)
14. Viernes Lázarus (Friday: Lazarus) (Pages 407-443)

15. Domingo las Verdades (Sunday: Truths) (Pages 443-463)
16. Miércoles Encenías (Wednesday: Renovation) (Pages 463-488)
17. Viernes Concilio (Friday: Council) (Pages 489-512)

Topics and Theology:

The general topics of the sermons seem to be rather standard themes for Lent, but Miércoles “Encenías,” is a sermon title derived from a Greek word for renovation, which harkens back to successive temple renewals in the Old Testament period. This suggests an analogous personal renewal process for Lent.

Non-Numbered Appendices:

1. Table of Places in Scripture:
Old Testament: 8 pages by chapters of books
New Testament: 8 pages by chapters of books
2. Index of Notable Materials:
Alphabetical list: 21 pages of Scriptural topics and terms

Conclusion:

If you are a long-winded preacher in Spanish, you will find much material provided in this book by Juan de Estrada Gijón, O.Praem. Sermons as long as 30 pages should animate your congregations considerably! For the highly motivated scholar, the theological, scriptural, and philosophical foundations of his sermonizing may be fruitful material for M.A. or Ph.D. research.

* One of the reforms of the old Spanish Cistercian was the introduction of triennial abbatial terms of office in an attempt to deal with the problems of long-serving commendatory abbots who often were predatory and harmful to community life. Abbots of the Spanish Reform were moved from Abbey to Abbey if they manifested good leadership skills.

± Although the short biography of Juan de Salces y Quevedo appearing in the introduction of this book names him as an abbot of San Norberto, Valladolid, neither the *Monasticon Praemonstratense* nor the *Diccionario Eclesiástico de España* includes him on the list of abbots for that Abbey.



Spanish Book Announcement: Norbertine Spain

Luis Barbastro Gil, *Los Premonstratenses: su presencia en España (1143-1835)*, edited by the Instituto Alicantino de Cultura "Juan Gil-Albert", Diputación de Alicante, Alicante, 2019. ISBN: 978-84-7784-806-6, 320 pages.

In fortunate timing for the celebration of the 900th anniversary of the Premonstratensian Order, the above book was published a few weeks ago. I recommend that all serious researchers, librarians in the Order, and those Norbertines interested in historical studies buy the book and familiarize themselves with the content. This will help many to expand their consciousness of the Order beyond the general confines of North European and North American perspectives concerning the mission and heritage of the Order. There is a fascinating story south of the Pyrenees.

Sincerely,
Terry Lauerman, O. Praem.

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Note from the Back Cover

Not lacking in this documented monograph are abundant references from distinct angles referring to other Abbeys in Spain in addition to those mentioned above. Among them are found in a unique way those of La Caridad (Ciudad Rodrigo) Sancti Spiritus (Ávila), Los Huertos (Segovia), Bujedo and Ibeas, (Province of Burgos), San Norberto and San Joaquín (Madrid), Urdax (Navarre), Bellpuig (Lérida), and the feminine convents of Toro (Zamora) and Villoria de Órbigo (Leon).

The Author

+ Born, Zaragoza, 1943

+ Licentiate in Theology, University of Salamanca, 1968

+ Licentiate in Philosophy and Letters, Central University of Barcelona, 1977

+ Doctorate in Geography and History University of Alicante, 1983

+ Professor of Geography and History in the Bachelor Institute “Figueras Pacheco” Alicante, 1979-2007

+ Published author of articles in specialized magazines and of the following books:

- El Monasterio De Piedra, Historia Y Paisaje Turístico
- Revolución Liberal Y Reacción (1808-1833)
- Los Afrancesados
- Señorio Del Monasterio De Rueda, El
- El Monasterio De Piedra, 1194-1836
- El Episcopado Español Y El Alto Clero En La Guerra De La Independencia (1808-1814)
- El Clero Valenciano En El Trienio Liberal (1820-1823)



Center for Norbertine Studies Update 2019/2020

Dr. Rosemary Sands

Saint Norbert College, De Pere, WI

Dr. Rosemary Sands (director of the CNS), Rebecca Lahti and Derek Elkins (both from the Emmaus Center) led a group of students on the Camino de Santiago in Spain during the second half of May 2019 as part of the course "**HUMA 389 Walking the Camino: The History and Spirituality of Pilgrimage**". They walked from Astorga to Santiago de Compostela over the course of 12 days for a total of 268 kilometers (166 miles). Before embarking on the Camino, Rosemary paid a visit to the Sisters from Villoria de Órbigo, who now reside in a retirement community in Astorga.

The **2019 Norbertine Heritage Tour** commenced in late June at Berne Abbey and Sint Catharinadal in the Netherlands, before continuing to Belgium to visit the Abbeys of Postel, Park, Grimbergen and Leffe. The tour concluded in France, where the group visited Mondaye Abbey, Prémontré, and Laon. This year's group included members of the Board of Trustees and SNC Vice Presidents. As always, Norbertine hospitality abounded, and the tour participants were moved by all that they learned about our Norbertine heritage.

The "**Year of Norbertine Women: Ever Ancient, Ever New**" was chosen by the CNS as its theme for the 2019/2020 academic year. Norbertine women from the 12th through the 21st century were featured throughout the year in a series of Lunch & Learn programs as a way to create awareness of the female branch of the Order and to shed light on the history. Heritage Week at the college featured a lecture on October 8th entitled "The Lost Women of Prémontré: Finding and Following the Footsteps of Medieval Women" given by Dr. Yvonne Seale, a Norbertine scholar and assistant professor of history at SUNY-Geneseo. Dr. Seale's doctoral dissertation, "Ten Thousand Women": Gender, Affinity, and the Development of the Premonstratensian Order in Medieval France," focused on St. Norbert's earliest female followers. A program, "Celebrating Norbertine Women Today," was held on campus on March 11th. The event highlighted the work being done by Norbertine canonesses today and the work of female Norbertine Associates here in the United States. Norbertine Associates Sue Pankratz and Kathie Tilot gave presentations, and Sisters Adriana, Benedikta, and Philomena were able to join us via Skype for part of the program. The Sisters also spoke via Skype with students in HUMA 337 *Communio* & the Norbertines. Scheduled

spring programs included a workshop on Christina of Hane (a 13th century Norbertine mystic) and a lecture on Katharina of Wurttemberg (a 15th-century canoness and countess) by noted Premonstratensian scholar Dr. Racha Kirakosian from Harvard University. Unfortunately, both programs had to be canceled due to the pandemic, but we are hoping to reschedule Dr. Kirakosian for 2021 or 2022. Information on Year of Norbertine Women programs and activities, including a link to a video of Dr. Seale's lecture, can be found on the CNS website

(<https://www.snc.edu/cns/annualtheme.html>).

The CNS has been working with our Office of Communications, Fr. David Komatz, and a software developer to update the **premontre.org website**. Once the major refresh is completed, the CNS will take over the upkeep and maintenance of the website.

The CNS continues to work with the Office of Communications, St. Norbert Abbey, Daylesford Abbey, Santa Maria de la Vid Abbey, St. Michael's Abbey, and the Bayview Priory in Delaware on plans for the **900th Anniversary Jubilee**.

The latest works uploaded to the **CNS page of the SNC Digital Commons** include the musical scores of Norbertine composers Dobbelsteen, Sromovsky, and Vanden Elsen. In addition to this inaugural digital issue of the *Communicator*, past issues of the *Communicator* will be scanned and uploaded throughout the coming year.

Rosemary Sands, DML
Director, Center for Norbertine Studies
St. Norbert College (De Pere, Wisconsin, USA)



The Voice of The Shepherd
Rev. Maurice Avicoli, O. Praem.
Daylesford

The thrust of the following reflection is twofold: a homily given by my confrere Father Joseph Serano on Christ, the Good Shepherd, and the recent liturgical celebration of Our Lady of Fatima.

Shepherds work hard to care for and manage sheep. They offer sheep three blessings: leadership, guidance, and defense. Good shepherds are willing to risk their own comfort, even their own lives, for the wellbeing of their flock.

Jesus was a good shepherd tending His Father's sheep. The Lord dedicated and offered up His whole life to win back sinful humanity, gone astray because of the Original Sin. His Passion and Death were the pinnacles of God's compassion, love, and mercy for sinners. Christ suffered in place of God's wayward sheep, atoning for their misbehaviors so that renewal and rebirth would emerge for all time, this moment in history. The Voice of Christ, the Good Shepherd, is heard through, with and in Christ's Body, the Church, the Eucharist in particular.

Fast-forward into history, the Voice Of The Shepherd was heard once more, in 1917, in Portugal, when the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to three shepherd children, at a time when the world was under siege and held captive by World War I. Terrible cruelty had been inflicted by humankind upon its members. It was called "the war to end all wars," so evil was its brutality. The apparitions at Fatima sounded the bell of God's extraordinary intervention in human culture: delivering through the three children a wake-up call to repentance, prayer, and conversion, that the face of the earth is renewed in a spirit of justice, peace and love. Governments were asked to put aside war, make reparations for evils committed and pursue the way of harmony. God was watching and watching over the work of His hands, gone astray, but through Mary's intercession, now being urged to embrace existence and daily life consistent with Divine truth.

In both cases presented above, God's Shepherding stands out: for ordinary sheep and for a world on the brink of catastrophe. God is present and active pruning what has spun out of control, in the hope of renewal and better life. Jesus was God's Good Shepherd pruning the flock entrusted to His care. The three Portuguese children likewise helped shepherd through the apparitions of Mary. The voice of God makes itself felt through the ministry of the Church but also through creation itself, made into God's image and likeness.

The mystery of Divine Messaging is that of the Holy Spirit, who employs persons, places, things, and events to prune the work of God's hands. Sheep need warnings to ensure their safety. Such were the people of 1917 who received a stern warning, couched in divine mercy, of the inherent dangers of nations going to war with other nations. Pruning, in this sense,

was God's procedure aimed at cutting down the bad in order to facilitate goodness and good-will among the world's citizens. Could it be that the COVID-19 pandemic is God's wake-up call seeking to shepherd humanity to better pastures that feature daily life more in tune with God's plan for creation?

The Lord is our shepherd, who guides us and leads us to restful waters, who refreshes our soul, despite the present dark valley and shadows of one's day to day pursuits. Deo gratis!



From the Editor

Welcome to a new era for *The Communicator*! With this June 2020 issue, my first as Editor, we are going digital. This opens up exciting new possibilities for this important publication. Without printing costs, we are able to present a more attractive looking periodical, and there is no limit to the number of pictures we can include. This comes at a perfect time for us as our global Community prepares to celebrate its 900th Anniversary.

To that extent, I am happy that this first “new” edition comes out before our celebration of our 900th actually begins. In some ways, this is a test issue. What I am most interested in is making sure this issue finds its way to everyone who would have received it in printed format. I am also hoping to confirm email addresses, those of the Correspondents, and to invite you to send me any specific names and email addresses of confreres in your Canonry or even another (non-English speaking) who should receive a digital copy. In the months before the November 2020 issue, I will be compiling these addresses and organizing distribution lists accordingly.

I am looking at an October 15, 2020 deadline for submissions for our November 2020 issue. I am planning on that issue “coming out” in conjunction with the opening of the celebration of our 900th.

On a personal note, I am honored and thrilled to take on the editorship of *The Communicator*. I was a Communications major in my undergraduate studies at Villanova University, not far from Daylesford Abbey, in my home state of Pennsylvania. I was also Entertainment Editor of our campus newspaper, *The Villanovan*. I loved my work on that publication and the

creative possibilities it presented. The same is true with this. In some ways, I'm going back to my youth and my roots to take on this wonderful project. What a marvelous opportunity to draw our global Norbertine-ness a little closer to home, wherever that may be. In the process of sharing our stories, our histories, our dreams, and our visions may the good work begun by Norbert in the 12th century at Prémontré continue to bear fruit in this 21st century, and be as vitally important today as it was then.

God bless you, especially in these uncertain times of global pandemic. I pray you and your loved ones are safe and healthy!

I would like to thank Michael F. Frish for his 9 years of dedicated service as editor of the Communicator. Please join me in wishing Michael well in moving forward.

Finally, on June 11, 2020, Abbot Domenic A. Rossi, appointed me Prior of Daylesford Canonry, on June 20, 2020, I was blessed. I ask you to keep me in your prayers as I assume this important role, here at Daylesford.

Yours in Saint Norbert,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John C. Zagarella', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

V. Rev. John C. Zagarella, O. Praem.