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6-2009

There was a song we sang at graduation ... I believe it was called the "Alma Mater." Could you share with me the history behind it?

Kristen Buettner '09

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June 2009

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

There was a song we sang at graduation ... I believe it was called the "Alma Mater." Could you share with me the history behind it?

Kristen Buettner '09

Answer:

Dear Kristen,

Oh yes – that lovely tune that we sing in celebration as we send forth our fine St. Norbert College graduates! It was just a few weeks ago that, on a very fine May day, we celebrated Commencement once again and joined in song with your classmates, our dear Class of 2009.

You are correct, this piece is indeed titled "St. Norbert College's Alma Mater." The song is actually quite a new composition. During the 1990s, the division of fine arts at the college conducted a competition to write lyrics for the college's "Alma Mater." The competition was open to students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends. It was Professor Heather Schmidt, an instructor of music, who won the contest. In 1998, the song was first sung at Commencement.

I will share the lyrics below. Every year in May I myself join graduates, their families and friends, and the administration of the college in this joyful song!

Hail to thee, St. Norbert College,



Ask the Abbot

As the founder of St. Norbert College, and having a prime seat in the center of campus throughout the years, I, Abbot Bernard Pennings, hold the answers to many of your burning questions about the college.

[Submit Your Question](#)

Held in God's protecting hand;
Memories of the past will guide us,
Give us strength to take our stand.

Hail, St. Norbert, how we love thee,
As we face the future strong;
Faith and hope, love and courage,
'Tis of these we raise our song.

As the river changed with the seasons,
So our lives may alter too;
Loyalty to your high purpose,
Keeps us steady, keeps us true.

As the spark's been lit within us,
We go first to share the flame;
Spreading light to all around us,
Through the promise of your name.

*Responses to "Ask the Abbot" questions are penned by St.
Norbert College staff in the name of Abbot Bernard Pennings,
O.Praem., who founded St. Norbert College in 1898.*

St. Norbert College

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