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Ask the Abbot

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Back in the day there was a St. Norbert yearbook. Do you know why the title of it used to be 'Des Pères'?

Mallory Ford '09

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October 2010

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

Back in the day there was a St. Norbert yearbook. Do you know why the title of it used to be ‘Des Pères’?

Mallory Ford '09

Answer:

My dearest Mallory,

Thank you most kindly for writing. It gladdens my heart to hear from alumni still reflecting on their hallowed time at St. Norbert.

Our great institution and the community in which we Norbertines founded it share a fascinating history. The answer to your question involves one small piece of it.

The former yearbook title was drawn from the City of De Pere’s original moniker, Les Rapides des Pères. This French term translates to “the rapids of the fathers.” The name was given to the city by a group of French Jesuit priests in 1671 in a respectful nod to the rough waters of the Fox River.

Today, those rapids are traversed by the Claude Allouez Bridge. For quite a spell, construction made crossing the river nearly as challenging for us modern folk as did the river rapids for those 17th-century Jesuits. What a relief it was after many months to once again enjoy simple, safe passage between St. Norbert College on the west side of the river and St. Norbert Abbey on the east side.



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](#)

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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