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Ask the Abbot

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As a student, I have walked past the sculpture of St. Norbert many times between classes. How long has the sculpture been there? Is there particular meaning behind what he is holding?

Colleen Shore '14

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September 2012

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

As a student, I have walked past the sculpture of St. Norbert many times between classes. How long has the sculpture been there? Is there particular meaning behind what he is holding?

Thank you,
Colleen Shore '14

Answer:

My dearest Colleen,

Thank you kindly for your inquiry. It affords me the pleasure of sharing with my readers the depth of meaning in the bronze sculpture – a true testament to the character of Norbert of Xanten, the founding father of the Norbertine order.

The sculpture stands in the quadrangle defined by Austin R. Cofrin Hall, the F.K. Bemis International Center, Dr. John R. Minahan Science Hall and Todd Wehr Hall. It quite movingly portrays St. Norbert as an energetic man and fearless preacher of God's word.

Norbert has two items in hand, both steadfastly symbolic. Bearing the branch of peace and the staff of leadership, he models the selfless sharing and love for others that is to infuse our lives. These principles, so interwoven in Norbertine ideals, translate most appropriately into the rich education provided at St. Norbert College.

The sculpture was erected in honor of our beloved institution's



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.

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centennial celebration, which took place in 1998. Mr. and Mrs. Norman Watermolen and the centennial class of 1998 graciously underwrote the cost of the sculpture, which was created by esteemed Minnesota artist Paul Granlund.

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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