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Ask the Abbot

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In your best estimation, how many graduating students have taken photos with you over the years?

Karen O'Connell '05

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June 2015

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

In your best estimation, how many graduating students have taken photos with you over the years?

Karen O'Connell '05

Answer:

My dear Karen,

What a delightful question to ponder! Dear me, when I consider the many fine graduates who have so graciously allowed me to assist in commemorating their St. Norbert College experience, I hardly dare venture a guess at their numbers. Nevertheless, it would be churlish to give your question less than my best effort.

Allow me to begin with a history lesson. (Rest assured, arithmetic shall follow!) My statue was dedicated on June 17, 1964. Originally, it found its home outside the Abbot Pennings Hall of Fine Arts. It was here that I resided for many years, keeping careful watch on students and their activities. With the completion of the Mulva Library in the year 2009, I found a new place to call home inside of the building's entrance. Thank goodness ... those Wisconsin winters were certainly wearing on my polished appearance!

Now, I believe I promised you an arithmetic lesson! Since my statue's dedication, 19,787 St. Norbert College students have graduated. That in itself is an extraordinary number, to be sure.



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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So many fine men and women prepared for all good work!
Let's allow that at least 50 percent of these young people followed our cherished Commencement tradition by climbing onto my marble knees for an, ahem, "photo op." (I have been told that I am quite poised and, dear me, "photogenic.") That would give us a count of, my goodness, almost 10,000! If my memory serves, though, I believe the true figure may be many more.

My mind is besieged by a succession of mental images of academic dress worn over "bell bottomed" trousers and tie-dyed fashions, topped by a succession of astounding hairstyles as dictated by the fashion of the day ... how the years do roll on!

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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