

St. Norbert College

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Ask the Abbot

Alumni Relations

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4-2017

### How do you feel about the college today?

Claire Westlie '13

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## April 2017

### Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

“In the college magazine, President Kunkel says, “I think if Abbot Pennings walked back on campus, and looked around for a while, and dropped in on the classes and the programs and the extracurricular activities ... I think he would feel pretty good that everything is still grounded in the values and tradition he brought to the place in the first place.” You have a great vantage point from your plinth in the library. How do you feel about the college today?”

Claire Westlie '13

### Answer:

Dearest Claire,

I must say that, although the entire campus has been transformed over the years, it does my heart good to see the essential things that remain constant in our community. The mission of the college is steadfast and strong today, just as it was when I founded it on the banks of the Fox River ever so long ago. For this, I credit not only each president, but those with whom each has worked alongside – our staff, faculty and our students throughout the years. It is only by this collective passion that an entity can flourish to such great extent.

Surveying the campus today, I see marks of mission not only in the buildings but in the hearts of the people who come here. Words like *communio*; “to teach by word and example”; and my own abbatial motto, “let us love one another” – these are



### 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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not only still in use, but we continue to lift one another up in our ongoing efforts to live them out.

I think you will understand that I have had a special heart for each of my six – soon to be seven! – successors in the president’s office. Who better than I can understand the responsibilities that have lain heavily on their shoulders during their time of leadership? Soon, it will be young Tom Kunkel’s turn to leave us. What a wonderful curator of our mission he has proven to be! And how much excitement lies in welcoming back one of our own in young Brian Bruess, our first alumnus president (Class of 1990, I believe) – since dear Father Burke, our 1926 alum. It is certainly bittersweet to bid each one of our presidents adieu as we celebrate their many achievements, and yet anticipate the fresh vision that new leadership brings with it.

So be it. My collective pride in this institution has been 119 years in the making. How blessed it is to witness such history unravel!

*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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