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The bronze sculpture of the Conversion of St. Norbert placed on campus last fall has a female figure kneeling near St. Norbert. Who is she, and what does she represent?

Magdalene Rabby '58

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July 2018

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

The bronze sculpture of the Conversion of St. Norbert placed on campus last fall has a female figure kneeling near St. Norbert. Who is she, and what does she represent?

Magdalene Rabby '58

Answer:

Dearest Magdalene,

This is a most pleasing question since it prompts reflection upon the truly life-altering conversion that is the founding story of our beloved order. Were it not for the extraordinary 12th-century event depicted, my Norbertine brethren and I would not live together in community – nor would our beloved St. Norbert College have come into being.

The sculpture depicts that pivotal moment in our founding saint's life when a bolt of lightning startled his horse and Norbert was thrown to the ground. Stunned by the fall, he recovered consciousness to hear the words of Psalm 34: "Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it." The figure you reference in your inquiry is of a spiritual nature – Divine Grace, if you will, ready to receive the heart that Norbert is pledging openly to God.

This beautiful campus monument, which keeps this beautiful and impactful moment present to our senses, is a most gracious gift from our dear friends Miriam (Brozyna) '69 and Jim



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](#)

Mulva. It was crafted by internationally renowned artist Jim Agius of Paona, Colo.

The story of the conversion of our beloved Norbert is one I wish for all of my readers to know and absorb. Beautiful and remarkable in nature, it is the foundation of our present-day mission and a crucial part not only of our own heritage, but of the whole of Christ's church. Norbert's influence rings down its history.

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

St. Norbert College

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