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**I've noticed a newly constructed archway on campus that marks the path leading into Old St. Joseph Church. What is its significance?**

John Marquez

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## October 2021

### Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

“I’ve noticed a newly constructed archway on campus that marks the path leading into Old St. Joseph Church. What is its significance?”

John Marquez (Enrollment Management)

### Answer:

My dear John,

I am simply delighted by this new development! I hear others on campus are also taking notice of this compelling work of art. According to my friends and confrères at St. Norbert College Parish, the portico (archway) invites those who pass beneath it to “Go to Joseph,” or, in Latin, “Ite Ad Ioseph.” This directive carries historical and spiritual connotations that are well worth contemplating, but one may also heed it quite literally by entering the sacred space of Old St. Joseph Church, by visiting the adjacent National Shrine of St. Joseph, or by reflecting at the Mary and Joseph Memorial Prayer Patio beside the new portico. Of course, I highly recommend doing all of these.

The phrase “Go to Joseph” also holds special meaning in 2021, which Pope Francis has proclaimed the Year of St. Joseph to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Joseph’s declaration as Patron of the Universal Church by Pope Pius IX. Pope Francis announced this against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which he believes has helped us see and appreciate



### 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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the people working behind the scenes to keep us safe and offer us hope: “Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. St. Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all.” Wise words, indeed!

Keen-eyed observers may notice that the portico is emblazoned with the years 1676 and 1890 on its opposite sides. In 1676 – nearly two centuries before I was born! – the Rev. Charles Albanel erected a small chapel at the site where our church now stands. This chapel stood for almost 200 years. The year 1890 marked the dedication of what we now know as Old St. Joseph Church, which became the original site for the National Shrine of St. Joseph in 1892 by decree of Pope Leo XIII. This church also became my spiritual home upon my arrival in De Pere in 1898, and the rest, as they say, is history.

The portico was designed by Wisconsin artist Rick Findora, and its creation was overseen by some of my favorite people: project leader Kerry Gross, parish member; my dear confrère Father James Baraniak, Class of 1989, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish; Patrick Wrenn, director of facilities at the college; and Deacon Kevin DeCleene M.T.S. ’12, pastoral leader at our St. Norbert College parish.

I am pleased to share that the portico will be dedicated and blessed on Sunday, Oct. 24, 2021, after the 10 a.m. Mass. More details about its creation and meaning will be revealed at that time. I encourage everyone who is interested to take part in celebrating this beautiful representation of our church’s past, present and future.

*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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