

# FIRSTFRUITS

"HAIL FIRSTFRUITS OF OUR JOY!"

— Typikon, Ode VII



"A GREAT SIGN APPEARED IN THE SKY,  
A WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN, WITH THE MOON UNDER HER FEET,  
AND ON HER HEAD A CROWN OF TWELVE STARS..."

— REVELATION 12:1



\* Queen of Virgins \* Queen of all Saints \* Queen Conceived without Original Sin \* Queen Assumed into Heaven \* Queen of Families \* Queen of Peace \* Pray for us! \* Queen of Martyrs \* Queen of Apostles \* Queen of Prophets \* Queen of Doctors \* Queen of Patriarchs \* Queen of Angels

Queen of Virgins \* Queen of all Saints \* Queen Conceived without Original Sin \* Queen Assumed into Heaven \* Queen of Families \* Queen of Peace \* Pray for us!



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Beloved Confreres & Consoeurs,  
Parents & Family,  
Benefactors & Friends,

*Laudetur Jesus Christus!*  
“The flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning the vines has come, and the song of the dove is heard in our land” –SONG OF SONGS 2:12. During this year of the 900th anniversary of the conversion of our holy father St. Norbert,

we are constantly bringing to mind the need of “pruning”, the need of daily personal conversion not for our sake alone, but for the common good of all. Our Lady, to whom St. Norbert had a great devotion, particularly under her title as the “Immaculate Conception”, is our loving Mother, and personally supports and encourages us in this daily struggle. Though she has “left the earth behind she has not distanced herself from this world....O Mother of God, Watch over each of us ... let no one escape your compassionate gaze” –Saint Germanus of Constantinople, *Sermon I on the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God.*

As we endeavor to bring the flower of conversion to fruit, let us turn with an open heart to the Dove, the Holy Spirit, Who is the Spouse of Mary, our Mother and Queen, and may His song be heard always in our land.

We give thanks to our God at every remembrance of you, praying always with joy in our every prayer for all of you. –cf. PHILIPPIANS 1:3

In the Hands of Jesus, the Divine Gardener of our hearts;

*Mother Mary Augustina O. Praem.*  
Mother Mary Augustine, O. Praem., Prioress and the Norbertine Canonesses of the Bethlehem Priory of St. Joseph



“THOU, O CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR, hast become for me the path of life which leads to the Father. There is but one path, and it is my joy, and at the end of it is the heavenly kingdom. ... May my heart be as a fertile field for Thee and may Thy grace sprinkle the dew of eternal life upon it. May Thy grace reap a good harvest on the field of my heart: humility, reverence, sanctity, and all that is ever pleasing to Thee. Return my soul to the sweet garden of paradise, and may it abide in the light that, surrounded by the delights of paradise, I too may say with all the saints: Glory to the Immortal Father; honor to Him who presents heavenly gifts to this worthless one, that he may bring a tithe of glory to the King of all!” – Saint Ephrem the Syrian, from *A Spiritual Psalter*



## “HAIL, O GARDENER OF THE GARDENER OF LIFE” – The Akathist Hymn

“I, WHO SPEAK TO YOU,  
AM THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN.  
I AM, AS IT WERE,  
A GARDENER OF THIS WORLD.  
For when a gardener sees the rise of a strong wind harmful to the little plants and the trees of his garden, at once he runs to them quickly and binds them fast with sturdy stakes as well as he can. And thus he comes to their aid, in various ways according to his ability, lest they be broken by the rushing wind or wretchedly uprooted.

I, THE MOTHER OF MERCY, do the same in the garden of this world. For when I see blowing on the hearts of human beings the dangerous winds of the devil’s temptations and wicked suggestions, at once I have recourse to my Lord



and my God, my Son Jesus Christ, helping them with my prayers and obtaining from Him His outpouring of some holy infusions of the Holy Spirit into their hearts to prop them up and savingly confirm them that they may be kept spiritually uninjured by the diabolic wind of temptations lest the devil prevail against human beings, breaking their souls and plucking them up by the stem in accord with his wicked desire. And thus when, with humility of heart and active compliance, human beings receive these said stakes of mine and my assistance, at once they are defended against the diabolic onslaught of temptations; and remaining firm in the state of grace, they bear for God and for me the fruit of sweetness in due season.”

– Our Lady to Saint Bridget of Sweden  
(From *Brigitta of Sweden, Life and Selected Revelations*)

– After Carlo Dolci, *The Virgin and Child with Flowers*, c. 1642  
“The Virgin holds an entwined branch of lilies and carnations and the Christ Child a red rose. The rose symbolises martyrdom, the Passion (Christ’s sufferings before the Crucifixion) and the sorrow of the Virgin. The lily represents the Virgin’s purity.” (The National Gallery, UK)

## GOD BLESS AMERICA

“Today we are saying a votive Mass of the Immaculate Conception because we want to honor Her under that title by which She is the patroness of the United States whose birthday we celebrate today. Principles, on a small scale, are the same when applied on a large scale. We know that if we want to advance quickly on the path of holiness we must be more greatly devoted to the Blessed Mother Mary, and she will work in our souls. Likewise, if we want our country to advance more quickly on the path of holiness, again, to whom do we turn? To the Blessed Mother, who will make us more and more resemble Her Son much more quickly than we could do by our own efforts. Therefore we pray; Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee!”

– Homily preached at the Bethlehem Priory of St. Joseph by one of our Norbertine Confreres, on July 4th, 2015

IN THIS GRACE-FILLED YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE  
November 28, 2014 to February 2, 2016

“Looking to the past with gratitude... Living the present with passion...  
Embracing the future with hope...”  
– Pope Francis - 3 Aims for the Year of Consecrated Life



## FIRST PROFESSION OF VOWS

During Mass on the vigil of the solemnity of Saint Norbert, Sr. Mary Dismas made her First Profession of Vows, promising to live poverty, chastity, obedience, conversion of ways, and life in community for the next three years. After signing the profession formula, Sister recieved a black veil (AT LEFT), signifying her complete submission to Christ and dedication to the service of His Mystical Body, the Church.

“The intention of the Mother of Fair Love in adorning us with the white habit – a symbol of purity – was no other that to teach us a true devotion to Her Immaculate Conception.”  
– Rev. Cornelius J. Kirkfleet, O. Praem., *History of St. Norbert*

## VESTITIONS IN THE HOLY HABIT



During Chapter on the solemnity of Saint Norbert, three postulants became Novices, receiving the white habit of our Order and their religious names: Sr. Mary John (Courtney), Sr. Mary Emmanuelle (Lindsay), and Sr. Mary Philomena (Alyssa).

On July 4th, we processed to our outdoor image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary chanting the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and there renewed our consecration to Jesus through Mary on behalf of our country.







THE NORBERTINE CANONASSES OF THE BETHLEHEM PRIORY OF ST. JOSEPH  
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Thank you to our friends who gave to our community an exquisite tabernacle and number of sacred vessels, as well as fine religious statues and furnishings.



ART ON THE COVER:  
"Madonna in Glory"  
by Carlo Dolci (1616-1687)

"*IMMACULATE VIRGIN, MOTHER OF GOD AND MOTHER OF MEN, WE BELIEVE WITH ALL THE FERVOR OF OUR FAITH IN YOUR TRIUMPHAL ASSUMPTION both in body and soul into heaven... where You reign, clothed with the sun and crowned with the stars, You are, after Jesus, the joy and gladness of all the angels and saints, and from this earth, over which we tread as pilgrims, comforted by our faith in the future resurrection, we look to You our life, our sweetness, our hope; draw us onward with the sweetness of Your voice, so that one day, after our exile, You may show us Jesus, the blessed Fruit of Your womb. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Amen. "*

— Pope Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, November 1, 1950

## OUR LADY OF PRÉMONTRÉ STATUE

To place an order for a limited selection of items from our upcoming catalog, please go to our website at [www.norbertinesisters.org](http://www.norbertinesisters.org) and click on the PDF file "Preview of Norbertine Sisters Gift Shop Catalog" (coming soon). Items include (pictured) single decade bronze St. Norbert rosaries, and Our Lady of Prémontré Statue, specially commissioned by the Norbertine Canonesses.



Our sturdy bronze rosaries are carefully hand crafted by the Sisters using the "wire wrap" method

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MAY GOD REWARD YOU FOR HELPING TO BUILD THIS FIRST NORTH AMERICAN FOUNDATION OF NORBERTINE CANONASSES!