

FIRSTFRUITS

"I remember the devotion of your youth,
how you loved me as a bride,
following me in the desert, in a land unsown.
Sacred to the Lord was Israel,
the first fruits of His harvest."

[JEREMIAH 2:2-3]

ANNOUNCING WITH JOY
OUR RECENT

Solemn Professions

"WITH OUR EYES FIXED ON JESUS AND HIS MERCIFUL GAZE,
WE EXPERIENCE THE LOVE OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY....

*This love has now been made visible and tangible in Jesus' entire life.
His person is nothing but love, a love given gratuitously."*

[Pope Francis, Misericordiae Vultus, Bull of Indiction for the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy]



“O God, who prepared a fit dwelling place for the Holy Spirit in the Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, graciously grant that through her intercession we may be worthy temples of your glory.”
[Collect for the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary]

Beloved Confreres, Parents, Family, Benefactors and Friends,

Laudetur Jesus Christus! The Sacred Heart of Jesus calls our hearts to be open to God's unfathomable love for us in His Beloved Son. His gifts ~ *The Incarnation; His Passion and Death; The Resurrection; His Church and the Sacraments, especially the Most Holy Eucharist; Our Blessed Mother and her Immaculate Heart* ~ show us His infinite love. And while the Lord's acts of love are endless, Jesus Himself singles out one as surpassing all others: “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (Jn. 15:13) This is the love with which He loves us; this is the love His Heart desires in return: “To love is to give all and to give oneself.” [St. Therese] May we have the grace to respond generously to His call. As we invite you to experience the joy of our Sisters’ professions and vestitions, and as we honor our holy founder, St. Norbert, at the closing of this grace-filled 900th Jubilee Year of his conversion, we also share deeply with you in the sufferings of our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ across the globe. May the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, pour out His merciful love upon us all.



Prayerfully in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Mother Mary Augustine O. Praem.

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



MY SOUL PROCLAIMS THE GREATNESS OF THE LORD...

My spirit rejoices in God my Savior!
[Luke 1:46-47]

At the Church of St. Malachy (Tehachapi), our community pauses for a photo with our Pater Abbas, the Rt. Rev. Eugene J. Hayes, O. Praem., our Provost, the Very Rev. Alphonsus Mary Hermes, O. Praem., the Administrator of St. Malachy’s, Rev. Mark Maxon, and all those who graciously assisted at the Solemn Profession Mass on June 4th, 2016. Ever grateful for the presence of St. Malachy’s and the parish’s generous offer to host the Solemn Professions, we pray that, in our Lord’s time, we may have a chapel of our own which will be suited for our cloistered canonical way of life, enabling us to welcome family, friends and special guests to defining sacred moments in our vocation as cloistered Norbertine canonesses.

For more information about our future chapel, please see the article later in this edition.



Our Bishop for the Diocese of Fresno, His Excellency Armando Ochoa, visited our monastery in November 2015.

VISITS FROM OUR FRESNO DIOCESE

— CONSTITUTIONS OF THE CANONESSES REGULAR OF THE ORDER OF PRÉMONTRÉ, N. 28 —

✦ “The nature of human and Christian communion, whose culmination is found in the celebration of the Eucharist, ought to be evident in our relations with the Bishop, clergy and laity of the locality wherever we reside.”

Our Bishop graciously came to the Solemn Profession reception (right after administering the Sacrament of Confirmation in California City) to congratulate and give his blessing to the newly-professed sisters.



In honor of the Year of Consecrated Life, in December 2015, we were blessed with a visit by 30 parishioners from St. Malachy’s, and our community was grateful to be welcomed at their parish for the Mass and reception of Solemn Profession. We extend a heartfelt ‘thank-you’ for the hospitality of the community at St. Malachy’s, while we await the day when we can host professions at our monastery.

Our Vicar of Religious for the Diocese of Fresno, Sr. Invencción Canas, RAD, and Sr. Goretti, RAD, visited our monastery in December 2015.



Where God Weeps

— THE TOP 10 COUNTRIES — OF EXTREME CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| SYRIA | NORTH KOREA |
| IRAQ | PAKISTAN |
| NIGERIA | CHINA |
| SAUDI ARABIA | SUDAN |
| ERITREA | VIETNAM |

An “International Movement of Love”

— AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED —

✦ Founded by Fr. Werenfried van Straaten, O. Praem

Fr. Werenfried, whose name means “warrior of peace”, was born in 1913 near Amsterdam, entered the Norbertine Abbey of Tongerlo, Belgium, in 1934 (he transferred to St. Michael’s Abbey, California, in 1980), professed his vows in 1936 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1940. In the aftermath of World War II, Fr. Werenfried wrote an article in the Abbey newsletter in 1947, begging Catholics to come to the aid of the 14 million displaced Germans. Despite intense hatred for the German people, Fr. Werenfried managed to collect such a great quantity of bacon and other provisions that he was able to send 15 freight trains to Germany and was nicknamed “The Bacon Priest”. He later wrote: “For me, the most pressing problem was making room for love again in Europe.” The rest of his life was spent founding and spreading this “international movement of love”, Aid to the Church in Need. He firmly believed that “people are better than we think” and after a full life as a “beggar for God’s suffering children”, Fr. Werenfried died at the age of 90 on January 31, 2003.



“Be God’s Mercy”

— A YEAR OF MERCY APPEAL FROM ACN —

“Carry out works of mercy together with Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) in every corner of the world, in order to meet the many, many pressing needs of today.”
[Pope Francis, in a video message personally supporting ACN’s “Be God’s Mercy” campaign]

“We see today our persecuted brothers decapitated and crucified for their faith in Jesus before our eyes, and often with our complicit silence.”
[Pope Francis, excerpt from ACN’s publication *Persecuted and Forgotten?*]



PRAY, PRAY, PRAY
“If we have really at heart the salvation of the whole human family... we must offer every day to the Eternal Father our prayers, works and sufferings, for her safety...”
[Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, 1943]

BECOME INFORMED & INFORM OTHERS
For a full report of the dire situation of our brothers and sisters visit:
WWW.AIDTOCHURCH.ORG
For broadcast schedules of the TV program “Where God Weeps” visit:
WWW.WHEREGODWEEPS.ORG

THE ACN CAMPAIGN
To join ACN in their Year of Mercy campaign, “Be God’s Mercy”, visit:
WWW.ACNMERCY.ORG





VESTITIONS IN THE WHITE HABIT

✦ “One thing I know is that the angels who witnessed the resurrection appeared clothed in white.”

[St. Norbert, Vita B]

On the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, June 4th, five postulants were vested with the white habit of the Order of Prémontré and received their religious name: [Pictured left to right] Sr. Mary Barnabas (Lorraine), Sr. Mary Edmund [Genings] (Monica), Sr. Mary Bonaventure (Tanya), Sr. Mary Josephine [Bahkita] (Julie) and Sr. Mary Francis [de Sales] (Rose).

“The white garments are indicative of the angels. The angels of the resurrection wore white garments. This is reported in all four Gospels. These messengers are ambassadors, envoys who have an important message to announce. Thus power and holiness, mission and proclamation are expressed in the white garments. The wearers should be messengers and envoys of the truth that the Lord lives, that he has victoriously overcome all death. Whoever wears the habit belongs to another way of life in the sense of Paul, ‘whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s’ [ROMANS 14:8], we belong now to Him and everyone can see it. It is a matter of a deeply reaching change of life and a new beginning in Christ.”

[The Rt. Rev. Thomas Handgrättinger, O. Praem., Abbot General of the Norbertine Order excerpt from an article on the traditional white Norbertine habit in the June 2016 issue of the *Communicator*]



Photo by KNXT-TV

THE EXAMINATION

The candidates are first examined as to their resolve to unite themselves more closely to God, to live by the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, to strive for perfect charity by living the Gospels, to spend their whole lives in the service of God’s people, and to live for God alone in solitude, silence, prayer and penance, humble work and holiness of life. To these questions they respond: “I am.”

THE PROFESSION

“I, Sister Mary N., offer and dedicate myself to the Church of the Immaculate Virgin Mary and St. Joseph of Bethlehem, and I promise a conversion of my ways and life in community, especially in poverty, consecrated chastity and obedience, according to the Gospel of Christ and the apostolic way of life, according to the Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions of the Canonesses Regular of the Order of Prémontré, in the presence of Mother Mary Augustine Monique Petit, Prioress, and of the sisters.”

[Profession Formula according to Constitutions of the Canonesses Regular of the Order of Prémontré]



Photo by KNXT-TV

*A heart that beats in unison with
the Heart of her Spouse*



Photo by KNXT-TV

Holy Communion during the Solemn Profession Mass at St. Malachy's Catholic Church

Solemn Profession of Vows

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

✦ “By our profession of vows, we give response to the mercy of God, who calls us, that, dead to sin and living for God, in a fraternal communio characterized by the evangelical counsels, we may follow Christ and imitate Him more closely.”

[Constitutions of the Canonesses Regular of the Order of Prémontré, N. 51]

On June 4th, the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Sr. Mary Magdalene, Sr. Mary Anne, and Sr. Mary Michael made their Solemn Profession of Vows, binding themselves to Jesus Christ for all eternity.

“In consecration, especially solemn vows, we enter more deeply into the vows of our baptism, renewing that sacrament, as it were. Dying to the old life of the world. Clinging to Christ in His passion and death. Rising to new life as we are clothed with Christ’s resurrection, like a baptismal garment clothing the babe taken from the font as a new child of God. Not walking away sad – like the rich, attached young man – but giving up house and lands for the sake of Christ and the Gospel like little children: with trust, simplicity and joy.”

[The Very Rev. Alphonsus Mary Hermes, O.Praem., excerpt from a homily given at our Monastery, May 24, 2016]



FIRST PROFESSION OF VOWS

✦ “You are obliged to renounce yourselves, to detach yourselves and divest yourselves freely and completely of all that is yours, for the sake of God, so as to bear the cross of Jesus Christ on your shoulders each day.”

[Sermon of St. Norbert]

During Mass here at the Priory on Sunday, June 5th, Sr. Mary Juan and Sr. Mary Gemma made their First Profession of vows and received the black veil. “Sisters, you are becoming engaged. But more intense than a human betrothal, your life is more like that of solemn vows than an engaged woman’s is like marriage. You will already observe the same poverty, the same chastity, the same obedience. You already have the same dependence on community and Divine Providence, the same mutual service. You already live in the house of the Beloved, renouncing all others. Though you are far from the world in body, now you are closer in spirit. Dead to the world in its pursuits and pleasures, you are alive to it by charity and prayer. So with Jesus I say, ‘young women, dear sisters, I tell you: arise,’ and with St. Paul, ‘God, who called you from your mother’s womb, has set you apart and called you through his grace.’ He is pleased to reveal His Son to you, to offer Him to you today as your Beloved.”

[The Very Rev. Alphonsus Mary Hermes, O.Praem., excerpt from his homily given at the Mass of First Profession]



Photo by KNXT-TV

THE CONSECRATION

“... Lord, send the gift of your Holy Spirit upon your servants who have left all things for Your sake. Father, may their lives reveal the face of Christ your Son, so that all who see them may come to know that he is always present in your Church.... May the gift they make of themselves hasten the coming of your kingdom, and make them one at last with your Saints in Heaven. We ask this through Christ our Lord.”

[Prayer of Consecration of the Professed according to the Constitutions of the Canonesses Regular of the Order of Prémontré]

HOLY COMMUNION

“Behold, the Lamb of God! Behold Him Who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb.” Perfectly present in all His glory, the most beautiful and gentle of Bridegrooms, true God and true man, He who is “Faithful and True” gives Himself entirely to His spouse and strengthens her to give herself entirely to Him. He has consumed her, and her life is no longer her own, but belongs to Love, and Him alone.

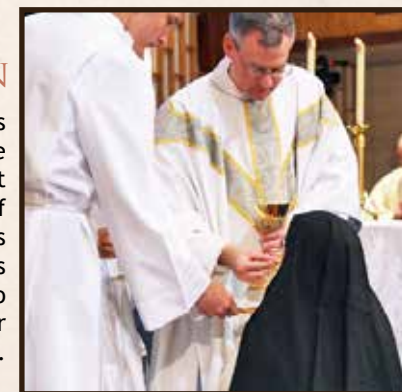


Photo by KNXT-TV

THE Sacred Heart of Jesus & THE Most Holy Eucharist

The revelations of Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in the 17th century provide a beautiful reflection on devotion to the Sacred Heart and its integral relation to the Holy Eucharist. Not only did Our Lord's "great apparitions" occur when the Saint was praying before the Blessed Sacrament, but the subject of His revelations were all about the Eucharist. The Lord spoke of the ingratitude and insults He received in the Blessed Sacrament, asking for acts of love, adoration, thanksgiving and reparation. He requested that the Friday after Corpus Christi be instituted as a special feast in honor of the Sacred Heart (leading us liturgically from the Eucharist to His Heart), and First Friday devotions to the Sacred Heart be instituted, involving the receiving of Holy Communion and keeping a Holy Hour with the Blessed Sacrament exposed.



Our Lord appears to St. Margaret Mary



One can see in these revelations that devotion to the Sacred Heart is intimately connected to the sublime mystery of love which our Lord Jesus instituted at the Last Supper, the Most Holy Eucharist: *"The particular object of this devotion is the immense love of the Son of God which induced Him to deliver Himself up to death for us and to give Himself entirely to us in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar."* [Rev. John Croiset, *The Devotion to the Sacred Heart*]

It is therefore no surprise that the feast day of St. Norbert, Apostle of the Eucharist, is found in the month dedicated to the Sacred Heart. His life, centered on daily holy Mass and the Eucharist, manifested his profound belief that Jesus - Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity - is present in the Eucharist, which includes His Sacred Heart. *"The faithful bear witness to and solemnly avow the faith of the Church that the Word of God is identical with the Son of the Virgin Mary, who suffered on the Cross, who is present in a hidden manner in the Eucharist, and who reigns upon His heavenly throne."* [Mediator Dei] Indeed, Norbert's reparation after the Tanchelm heresy in the 12th century may be seen as a response to the call of the Sacred Heart, a call which transcends time, with Norbertines from and since the days of our holy founder embracing our rich spiritual heritage, continuing through our way of life Norbert's deep devotion to the Eucharistic and Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.



St. Hermann Joseph with the Child Jesus

Inspired by *"The Sacred Heart and the Eucharist,"*

by Servant of God, Fr. John A. Hardon

[http://www.therealpresence.org/archives/Sacred_Heart/Sacred_Heart_001.htm]

— In Honor of our
Holy Father,
St. Norbert,
Apostle of the Eucharist —



— Conclusion of the
Grace-filled
900th Jubilee Year of His
Conversion —

"FAITH WAS THE OUTSTANDING VIRTUE OF NORBERT'S LIFE."
[Office of Readings for June 6, Feast of St. Norbert]

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life."

[JOHN 6:53,56]

Our holy father, St. Norbert, bequeathed to our Order a spiritual legacy of inestimable value: *his profound faith*. And especially his *faith* in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. His life testifies to an unshakable belief in the Truth that the fullness of grace comes to us through the means willed by the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ: His Church and the Sacraments, and particularly the Eucharist, without which we do not have life. Jesus filled Norbert daily with His grace in Holy Communion, transforming him into Himself, into a vessel of His divine love, enabling him to convert thousands, heal the sick and possessed, reconcile multitudes, and perform countless miracles. One can see why and how St. Norbert came to be known as the "Apostle of the Eucharist":

✦ When St. Norbert gave away all of his belongings, he kept only a Mass kit so that he could celebrate readily and everywhere. He offered Mass daily (12th century) when it was not the standard practice. After celebrating the Holy Sacrifice, his preaching would captivate the minds and hearts of all, his heart being inflamed with love from contact with our Eucharistic Lord. He told his brothers: "It is at the altar that we show our faith and our love for God."

✦ St. Norbert never undertook any important work without saying Mass and spending hours before the Blessed Sacrament. His miracles often occurred after he had just celebrated Holy Mass, such as his healing of a blind man when he breathed on him after consuming the Precious Blood, or reconciling feuding peoples after celebration of the Holy Sacrifice.

✦ He crushed the Tanchelm heresy, which had spread false teachings about the Eucharist and Real Presence in Antwerp and the surrounding area. After attempts to stop the heresy failed, the Bishop decided the only man capable of defeating it was St. Norbert. The holiness of St. Norbert and his zealous companions won the hearts of the people. The entire city was converted, with Norbert ordering solemn services of reparation.

And he passed this *faith* on to us, members of His Order: the *faith* which Norbertine martyrs manifested throughout the centuries in giving their lives for Christ and His Church; the *faith* which enabled the Order to survive the turbulent times of the French Revolution and other persecutions in Europe, despite loss of lives and monasteries; the *faith* which inspired the founding of *Aid to the Church in Need*; the *faith* which underlies the consecration of every Norbertine religious in giving oneself totally and unreservedly to Christ. This *faith*, a gift from God, is the *same faith* we see shining around the globe today, in those who joyfully travel by foot for miles just to attend Holy Mass, fully aware that their very lives may be required that very day because of their *faith*, their belief in the Real Presence, in the True Bread of Life. Thank you, St. Norbert.

— THE FIRST HYMN WRITTEN TO THE SACRED HEART —

✦ By Norbertine St. Herman Joseph (1150-1241)

Hail Heart of Jesus, King Supreme!
All hail my happy song's great theme!
I long Thy beauty to possess,
Yet wonder that Thy holiness
should bide my sinful breath.

Oh Heart of God, broken for me
upon the Cross of Calvary
be this my prayer, my sole desire:
that my poor heart, at length afire
may love in deed and truth.

The wistful lance that pierced Thy side
hath opened fountains that abide
To wash my soul of every sin
to cleanse without, to heal within
to make me whole and free.



Picking chamomile flowers to dry and make into tea bags for the upcoming "Un-Tea Party" invitations.

Adoration of the Most Holy Eucharist during a visit by Rev. Ambrose Criste, O.Praem. (Novice Master) and a group of seminarians from St. Michael's Abbey.



OUR HORARIUM

(OR SCHEDULE)

(Please call for our Friday and Sunday schedules)

Midnight	Vigils – Office of Readings (Matins)
6:00 am	Morning prayer (Lauds) & Angelus
6:30 am	Martyrology & Chapter
7:15 am	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament & Mid-morning prayer (Terce)
8:20 am	Benediction
8:30 am	The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
10:00 am	Work, Class, or Study
11:45 am	Mid-day prayer (Sext), Angelus & Rosary
1:00 pm	Mid-afternoon prayer (None)
1:30 pm	Grand Silence - prayer, rest, exercise, etc.
2:30 pm	Work, Class, or Study
5:15 pm	Evening prayer (Vespers) & Angelus
5:45 pm	Lectio Divina
6:30 pm	Supper, followed by Recreation
8:00 pm	Night prayer (Compline)
9:00 pm	"Lights Out"



(ABOVE) The Rosary procession to our outdoor Holy Family statue during the annual May Crowning on the feast of the Visitation, May 31st.
(LEFT) Chanting Sext.

At the Solemn Profession reception, Mother helps the three new "Brides of Christ" cut their wedding cake. While the entire community was not present at the reception due to our cloistered vocation, the three newly-professed sisters were able to attend and thank family and friends for their support and prayers.



Photo by KNXT-TV

Our Future Chapel & ACCESSORY AREAS



By Mark Russell, A.I.A.
Radian Design Group, Inc.

Rendering of future chapel and wing/accessory areas

— PHASE II OF EXPANSION —

Phase II of our Monastery Expansion Project, our future chapel and wing/accessory areas, will serve to address our acute space needs, while providing the proper sacred ecclesial and monastic architecture for our worship and the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, the heart and center of our life as Norbertine canonesses. The estimated cost of Phase II is \$12 million, taking into account the 40 foot slope area on which the tri-level chapel will be built, as well as the tri-level wing/accessory areas. To date, we have received over \$500,000 for this project, needing a minimum of \$8 million in order to go forward with architectural plans and the bid process. Putting all of our trust in God, we continue to share our vision with others, as we give thanks for our dear friends in Christ who wish to help with this most pressing need, including friends who are organizing a second *A Night at the Vineyard* benefit, set for Saturday, August 27, 2016, here in Tehachapi at Triassic Vineyards; other friends who are planning a first-ever benefit in Los Angeles later this year; and more friends who are hosting an "Un-Tea Party" benefit this year. Every donation makes a difference, and we thank all of you who are supporting this project through our *FirstFruits* offering envelopes, online donations through our website, and more. May God bless you all!





THE NORBERTINE CANONRY OF THE BETHLEHEM PRIORY OF ST. JOSEPH
17831 Water Canyon Road
Tehachapi, California 93561-7686 USA

NON PROFIT
U.S. Postage
PAID
Bakersfield, CA
Permit #110

With profound gratitude, we extend our special thanks to Mr. Paul Benz, Sr., and the Benz Family of Tehachapi-based Benz Companies for their generous support during our years in Tehachapi, wishing them God's blessings as they transfer their business to new owners in August.



*"In the Heart of Jesus, the center of Christianity is set before us.
It expresses everything, all that is genuinely new and revolutionary in the New Covenant.*

His Heart calls to our heart.

It invites us to step forth out of the futile attempt of self-preservation and, by joining in the task of love, by handing ourselves over to Him and with Him, to discover the fullness of love which alone is eternity and which alone sustains the world."

[Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI), *Behold the Pierced One*, p. 69]

— THE NORBERTINE CANONESSES — are now enrolled in the eScrip program

eScrip allows you to sign up and choose an organization to which 3% of every purchase you make at participating stores is automatically donated. All contributions to our new account will go to our "Future Chapel Fund". Please consider learning more and signing up for free at

WWW.ESCRIP.COM

and selecting

NORBERTINE ASSOCIATION
OF ST. JOSEPH

eScrip Group ID - 500654139



- BETHANY GUEST HOUSE - Sharing with you the Norbertine charism of prayer and hospitality



For parents
visiting
from afar,
for those
discerning
religious
vocations,
for anyone
seeking
a time of

more intense prayer and solitude...it's for you.
(Day visits and overnight stays are possible.)

Call now to schedule your visit and for details
(weather, dress, etc.): (661) 823-1066

NOW UP & RUNNING...

Norbertine Canonesses WEBSITE

✦ Online Norbertine Canonesses
Monastery Gift Shop
(pay with credit card)

✦ Photo Gallery of Solemn Professions

✦ Our Horarium in photos

✦ Information on
Our Holy Founder, St. Norbert

✦ ... and more

WWW.NORBERTINESISTERS.ORG

Please kindly help us update our address & email
database by sending us your current information.

THE NORBERTINE CANONESSES' MONASTERY GIFT SHOP



✦ GIFT SHOP HOURS:
Daily 10-11:30 am, 2:30-5 pm
(except Fridays, 2:30-4:15 pm)

✦ FOR GIFT SHOP PURCHASES
Please visit us at the Monastery or at our NEW
online Gift Shop at www.norbertinesisters.org

✦ WE ARE HERE TO OFFER PRAYERS FOR
YOU AND YOUR INTENTIONS -
You are welcome to call us:
(661) 823-1066 - or -
email us: pray_req@cybersurfers.net or
MotherMaryA@aol.com.

May God reward you for helping to build this first North American foundation of Norbertine canonesses!