

FIRST FRUITS

*"The women applaud, for in another time it was a woman who was the imprudent occasion of sin,
now too it is a Woman who brings in the FirstFruits of salvation." (St. Andrew of Crete)*

SANCTA DEI GENITRIX



Holy Mother of God



YOUR MOTHERHOOD,
O VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD,
HAS HERALDED JOY
TO ALL THE WORLD;
FOR FROM YOU
HAS RISEN
THE SUN OF JUSTICE,
CHRIST OUR GOD.

(Roman Breviary)

Peperit Filium suum primogenitum. Luc. 2. v. 7.

C P S C M

Klauber Cath. sc. et exc. A.V.

"And she gave birth to her firstborn Son." [LUKE 2:7]

Son of God and Son of Mary

Both God the Father and the Blessed Virgin Mary profer the same truth:
Ego hodie genui te. "Today I have begotten You." [cf. PSALMS 2:7; HEBREWS 1:5; 5:5]

Mother of Our Savior

The Virgin Mary is the one of whom it is said, "She will bear a Son and name him Jesus, and He will save His people" [cf. MATTHEW 1].



Pariet Filium, et vocabis nomen ejus Iesum: ipse enim salvum faciet populum suum. Matth. 1.

P. S. C. M. K. Tauscher Cath. Sc. et ex.

About the above image: The medallion with Madonna and the Christ Child is framed by a Crown of Thorns, marked by the many instruments of His Passion, hanging on the Cross, the same Cross the Child is pointing to with His right hand. The caption above Mary's head: "Est Mater mea" highlights that she is not only the Mother of the Savior, but "my Mother." Christ is destined to be the Savior of the world [cf. Genesis 3:15].

The lower half of the engraving shows the Nativity scene. The message of the angel to the shepherds and to us, is: "Today a Savior is born to you."



Norbertine confrere Fr. Alphonsus Mary of St. Michael's Abbey, on spiritual maternity and on holiness and the integration of all the aspects of our human nature: spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, and physical.

Dear Parents, Confreres, Friends, Family and Benefactors,
Praised be Jesus Christ! Now and forever. Amen.

In a more special way during the liturgical seasons of Advent and Christmas, our thoughts spontaneously turn to the Blessed Virgin Mary, "Cause of our Joy". It is with grateful hearts that we esteem her, above all others, "an advocate of grace and a model of holiness" [Preface of the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception], particularly in the mysteries of these Holy Seasons, mysteries that were dependent upon the Virgin's "Fiat", her "Yes" to God and His plan for her. This life-giving response to God, made in great faith, brought about the birth of the Word made flesh, our Redeemer Jesus Christ, Who wrought our eternal salvation.

Mindful of all of you who, in imitation of Our Lady, continue to give your generous "Fiat" to God in helping to provide for the spiritual and material needs of our canonry, we extend our heart-felt thanks: first, to our Norbertine Abbot General Thomas Handgrätinger; to our Pater Abbas, Fr. Abbot Eugene Hayes, O. Praem., our Provost, Fr. Alphonsus-Mary Hermes, and our confreres of St. Michael's Abbey, for the continuing inestimable gifts of the sacraments, and of instructing and edifying us through homilies, classes, retreats and especially by example; to Rev. Msgr. Myron Cotta, our Diocesan Administrator, for your gracious response to our various needs over the past year, joining you and the entire Fresno Diocese in praying for our new Bishop, The Most Rev. Armando Ochoa, whose installation ceremonies will begin with Vespers on February 1, 2012; and to our parents, families, friends and benefactors for your gifts of time, talents and resources to us, especially in this time of economic difficulty. We remain ever grateful for you all, and we assure you of your prominent place in our hearts and prayers.

May we enter more deeply into Christ's mysteries with the same spirit of wonder and gratitude that animated the life of the Virgin Mary, for our Lord makes it clear in the sacraments, throughout Sacred Scripture and in the events of our everyday lives "how anxious He is to be with us, how He loves us, and how He wants to be taken into our souls and loved." [Rev. Edward Leen, [Retreat Notes for Religious](#)]

Most gratefully in the Divine Infant,

Mother Mary Augustiny O. Praem.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts
for your generous support of our growing community!



Our annual
community
retreat was
preached by
our Provost,

THE CHRISTMAS MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATE GOD—ESSENTIAL TO NORBERTINE SPIRITUALITY



[Excerpt from "Three Accesses to Our Canonical Spirituality: Christmas—Easter—Pentecost", slightly adapted for this newsletter, by Abbot General Thomas Handgräter, O.Praem.]



According to tradition Norbert [c. 1080-1134] and his companions knelt down before the Newborn Savior and laid their profession document at the feet of the Child Jesus [at Christmas 1121]. In the abbey church of Oosterhofen [Germany], now a minor basilica, there is, in the choir area in front of the present people's altar and in front of the former communion rail, a star embedded in the marble floor. At solemn profession, the candidate is said to have prostrated there on the star when the Litany of the Saints was sung before the profession. The star embedded in the floor [photo at lower right] is exactly under the Christmas ceiling fresco [photo right]. The prostration takes place in memory of and as a sign of the *kenosis* and the profession with the promise of obedience signifies approaching the obedient, humbled Jesus. But in this Christmas event it is a matter of God's Incarnation, which was attained not without sacrifice, obedience, and self-divesting. The life of the monastery is nothing other than a human life dedicated to God first in becoming man through total dedication and alignment with the Lord on the way to God, on the way to becoming one with God. Here, the life of the monastery is closely linked with the Incarnation and interpreted by the Christmas mystery.

On the ceiling fresco in the Asam church of Oosterhofen-Altenmarkt [above], Norbert, dressed as a canon [see arrow and description at above right], is kneeling before the Newborn Savior with outstretched arms. On the open book that lies before him next to his crosier and biretta you can read "*VOTA MEA psal ...*". Angels who are singing and making music frame the entire manger scene. In this way Norbert's handing over of himself on Christmas is emphasized pictorially. With the vows, the professed hands himself over to the "Church of Oosterhofen", as he places the profession document on the altar. Here in the fresco, the manger becomes the altar, which symbolizes Christ Himself. The profession is the handing over to Christ, "*offerens trado meipsum*", it is immersion into the framework of the life of the Lord Who Himself lived poor, chaste and obedient. The profession is the juridical, mutual and lifelong acceptance and binding of candidate and community, at the same time the complete transfer to the life form of "*vita consecrata*", which measures up to Christ and comprises a life in "conversion of my life, life in community, above all poverty, consecrated celibacy and obedience." The canonical profession, which frequently was described as a second baptism, insofar as we have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection under the aspect of the Christmas event, bring this kenotic content especially into focus.



St. Norbert, dressed as a canon kneeling before the Newborn Savior with his profession document

[PHOTOS LEFT and BELOW 2006 ARCHIVES: taken at the abbey church of the former Norbertine community of Oosterhofen-Altenmarkt, Bavaria, founded in the 12th century.]



The root of Jesse has blossomed; the star of Jacob has risen; a Virgin has brought forth the Savior.



Our God, we praise You.

[St. Leo the Great]



NORBERTINE PRIEST REV. PIERRE-ADRIEN TOULOURGE (FR. PETER-ADRIAN) MARTYR FOR THE TRUTH TO BE BEATIFIED APRIL 29, 2012



Last April 2nd, we had the great joy of learning from the Norbertine Postulator General, Fr. Gabriel Wolf, O.Praem, that on the same day, our Holy Father Benedict XVI authorized the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to promulgate thirteen decrees. Among the future Blessed is Father Peter-Adrian Toulorge (1757-1793), professed priest of the Premonstratensian Regular Canons of Blanchelande's Abbey, France, guillotined in hatred of the Faith at Coutances, France on October 13, 1793.

Peter-Adrian Toulorge was born in Normandy, France in 1757, ordained a priest in 1782 and sent to work in a parish in Denville where the head pastor was a Norbertine of Blanchelande Abbey. Inspired by the example of his fellow priest, Peter-Adrian decided to join that same community. But, after only a few years at the Abbey, Peter-Adrian's pursuit of religious life was disrupted for in 1789 the French Revolution broke out and the newly installed government intended to make the Church suffer. In 1792, a law was passed stating that all public servants of the Church must either take an oath swearing by the new government's constitution or leave France. Peter-Adrian, who was a religious priest assumed that the law applied him and left France for England. However, once he realized that the new law did not apply to him, Peter-Adrian returned home, where upon, he learned that a more recent law had been passed forbidding priests who had left France ever to return. The penalty for doing so was death by guillotine. Forced to make a decision, Peter-Adrian chose to remain in France and continue his priestly ministry in secret. He bravely traveled the countryside in women's clothing, carrying with him a sack containing his cassock, liturgical vestments, liturgical books and an altar stone. Eventually, Peter-Adrian was betrayed and handed over to the authorities. Writing to his brother the eve before his death, Peter-Adrian-encouraged him: "*I will not have you grieve over my fate, but rather rejoice even more and say with me, 'Praise the Lord!'*" On October 13, 1793, Peter-Adrian received the crown of martyrdom, a martyr for the truth.

(Information in English: www.postulatio.info)

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

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*Thank you for your continued support of
our seasonal wreath fundraiser—our best season ever!*



*Some Pre-Construction Work
(Pray that all may be in place
for "ground-breaking" in the spring!)*



Numerous prayers were said for a safe landing of our
modular trailer Novitiate building.

[The engravings and commentary of "Sancta Dei Genitrix" and
"Mater Salvatoris" (slightly adapted here for this newsletter) are
from the University of Dayton's Marian Library.]

Exploring Artisan Cheese-making



- BETHANY GUEST HOUSE -

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prayer and hospitality



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for those
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to find out about our vestments, gift shop inventory and hours, or Bethany Guest House,
you are welcome to phone (661) 823-1066 or use our email accounts: pray_req@cybersurfers.net or MotherMaryA@aol.com
(If you do not receive an acknowledgement of your message, please resend it or call.)

Also, please kindly assist us in updating our address and email database by sending us your current information!

Please check www.norbertinesisters.org for the downloadable version of this newsletter in color.

Thank you to all who make this newsletter possible! References are available upon request.



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