

Lyceum 137 – March 5, 2026, 2026, a forum to Think, Discuss, Share, and Learn from one another. Your input is welcomed - Iron sharpens iron.

Neighborhood “The 1826, in Connecticut, a farmer named Josiah Holbrook started a school for ‘the general diffusion of knowledge and raising the moral and intellectual taste’ of Americans. In those days, the opportunities for higher education were limited to those venerable old universities that had long served the upper crust. Holbrook’s vision was to make learning – practical, liberal, and humane – available to working people of all kinds. He named his school the Lyceum, after the garden where Aristotle once taught his students philosophy.... We need to go deeper than the superficial fights that characterize public life. We need to return to the first principles and meet each other there as human beings.”– Nathan Beacom, Plough Magazine, Autumn 2023, p. 9.

We continue to highlight a sacrament weekly, having completed Baptism, Penance, Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, and now **Ordination**.

Thomas Merton defined the sacrament as a “sacrament of the presence of God.” He emphasized that the sacrament is not merely an outward sign, but also a spiritual presence and action of grace and power.

**Prayer In Honor of
St. Norbert**

**O God, who made the Bishop St. Norbert
a servant of your Church
outstanding in his prayer and pastoral seal,
grant, we ask, that by the help of his intercession,
the flock of the faithful
may always find shepherds after your own heart,
and be fed in the pastures of salvation.**

**Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever. Amen.**

900th Jubilee Prayer of the founding of the Norbertine Order (1121-2021).

“God, our Father, in your eternal wisdom and unending mercy you called Norbert of Xanten to reform the Church of his time.

Inspired by the example of the apostles and first Christians, he gathered others to live a common life to be sent out to preach and announce the Good News. Wearing the white habit as a sign of the Resurrection, you led him to found the first Norbertine Community 900 years ago in Premontre.

In gratitude, we celebrate this Jubilee Year of our presence and humble service in the Church. Inspire us with the zeal of Saint Norbert to be witnesses to your loving presence in the world today.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

St. Norbert, pray for us.”

The Sacrament of Holy Orders is the continuation of Jesus Christ's priesthood, which He bestowed upon His Apostles. This is why the Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to the Sacrament of Holy Orders as "the sacrament of apostolic ministry."

"Ordination" comes from the Latin word *ordinatio*, which means to incorporate someone into an order. In the Sacrament of Holy Orders, a man is incorporated into the priesthood of Christ at one of three levels: the episcopate, the priesthood, or the diaconate.

The Priesthood of Christ

God founded the priesthood for the Israelites while they were journeying out of Egypt. God chose the tribe of Levi as priests for the Hebrew nation. The primary duties of the Levite priests were the offering of sacrifice and prayer for the people. Jesus Christ, in offering Himself up for the sins of all mankind, fulfilled the duties of the Old Testament priesthood finally. But just as the [Eucharist](#) makes Christ's sacrifice present to us today, so the New Testament priesthood is a sharing in the eternal priesthood of Christ. While all believers are, in some sense, priests, some are set aside to serve the Church as Christ Himself did.

Eligibility for the Sacrament of Holy Orders

The Sacrament of Holy Orders can be validly conferred only on [baptized men](#), following the example set by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, who chose only men as their successors and collaborators. A man cannot demand to be ordained; the Church has the authority to determine who is eligible to receive the sacrament.

While the episcopate is universally reserved to unmarried men (in other words, only unmarried men can become bishops), the discipline regarding the priesthood varies between East and West. The Eastern Churches allow married men to be ordained priests, while the Western Church insists on celibacy. But once a man has received the Sacrament of Holy Orders in either the Eastern Church or the Western Church, he cannot marry, nor can a married priest or a married deacon remarry if his wife dies.

The Form of the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church notes.

The essential rite of the sacrament of Holy Orders for all three degrees consists in the bishop's imposition of hands on the head of the ordinand and in the bishop's specific consecratory prayer asking God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and his gifts proper to the ministry to which the candidate is being ordained.

Other elements of the sacrament, such as holding it in the cathedral (the bishop's own church); holding it during Mass; and celebrating it on a Sunday are traditional but not essential.

The Minister of the Sacrament of Holy Orders

Because of his role as a successor to the Apostles, who were themselves successors to Christ, the bishop is the proper minister of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The grace of sanctifying others that the bishop receives at his own ordination allows him to ordain others.

The Ordination of Bishops

There is only one Sacrament of Holy Orders, but there are three levels to the sacrament. The first is that which Christ Himself bestowed upon His Apostles: the episcopate. A [bishop](#) is a man who is ordained to the episcopate by another bishop (in practice, usually by several bishops). He stands in a direct, unbroken line from the Apostles, a condition known as "apostolic succession."

Ordination as a bishop confers the grace to sanctify others, as well as the authority to teach the faithful and to bind their consciences. Because of the grave nature of this responsibility, all episcopal ordinations must be approved by the Pope.

The Ordination of Priests

The second level of the Sacrament of Holy Orders is priesthood. No bishop can minister to all the faithful in his diocese, so priests act, in the words of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, as "co-workers of the bishops." They exercise their powers lawfully only in communion with their bishop, and so they promise obedience to their bishop at the time of their ordination.

The chief duties of the priesthood are the preaching of the Gospel and the offering of the Eucharist.

The Ordination of Deacons

The third level of the Sacrament of Holy Orders is the diaconate. Deacons assist priests and bishops, but beyond the preaching of the Gospel, they are granted no special charism or spiritual gift.

In the Eastern Churches, both Catholic and [Orthodox](#), the permanent diaconate has been a constant feature. In the West, however, the office of deacon was for many centuries reserved to men who intended to be ordained to the priesthood. The permanent diaconate was restored in the West by the Second Vatican Council. Married men are allowed to become permanent deacons, but once a married man has accepted ordination, he cannot remarry if his wife dies.

The Effects of the Sacrament of Holy Orders

The Sacrament of Holy Orders, like the [Sacrament of Baptism](#) and the [Sacrament of Confirmation](#), can only be received once for each level of ordination. Once a man has been ordained, he is spiritually changed, which is the origin of the saying, "Once a priest, always a priest." He can be dispensed of his obligations as a priest (or even forbidden to function as a priest), but he remains a priest forever.

Each level of ordination confers special graces, from the ability to preach, granted to deacons; to the ability to act in the person of Christ to offer the Mass, granted to priests; to a special grace of strength, granted to bishops, which allows him to teach and lead his flock, even to the point of dying as Christ did. -Conference of Catholic Bishops and Updated on January 19, 2019 – Scott P. Richert.

Ordination invitation- Remembrance of Events Past.

“In the spirit of Christian Joy, the Norbertine Community and Harry and Verna Vanden Busch and family announce the Ordination to the Priesthood of Roger Joseph Vanden Busch, Canon Regular of Premontre, to be conferred by the Most Reverend John B. Grellinger, D.D. on Tuesday, March 19, 1968, four o’clock in the afternoon at St. Norbert Abbey Church, De Pere, Wisconsin.

You are invited to participate in a Mass of Thanksgiving, concelebrated, Sunday, March 24, noon, SS. Peter and Paul Church, North Baird and Willow streets, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

First priestly blessing and reception at SS. Peter and Paul gymnasium, 3:30 to 5:30 pm.”

Homily: First mass of Fr. Roger J. Vanden Busch, O. Praem. March 24, 1968

By Fr. Edward Stibili, O. Praem

Father Abbot Killeen, Msgrs. Skell and Stenger, fellow priests, relatives, and friends of Fr. Vanden Busch and fellow Christians!

The entire church today rejoices as it sings in the Introit: “Rejoice, O. Jerusalem, and come together, all you who love her; rejoice with joy, you who have been in sorrow.” We too, gathered here, rejoicing with the church. Our joy is special, for it focuses on Fr. Roger, and the achievement and the hope of a new priest who has arisen from our midst. We rejoice with you, Fr. Roger! The church rejoices with you. We are happy that you have accepted the call to serve the Christian community which, “like a pilgrim in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God.” You have chosen to serve the community at a time of much change in the church and in society.

Indeed, these are times of profound, disruptive change. And, like most times in human history, they are marked by misunderstanding, bitterness, and even violence and war. There is talk of alienation and disintegration, and the collapse of traditional values. Hope is giving way to cynicism. Science and technology, which only a few decades ago were viewed as the key to human progress, are now skeptically seen as forces that depersonalize and cheapen our existence and relationships with one another. The Church itself, painfully groping for creative ways of expressing truths and worshipping in the spirit of Vatican II.

Amid all this chaos, today, the church in the liturgy rejoices we have a new priest, leader, and servant who stands in our midst, Fr. Roger. We rejoice because we know that in his twofold duties of proclaiming the Word of God and administering the

sacraments, Fr. Roger will make God and his saving work in Jesus Christ present to, with, and for us.

It is the Word of God which creates the Church community and gathers us together by awakening our faith. As the apostle Paul said: “But they will not ask his help unless they believe in him, and they will not believe in him unless they have heard of him, and they will not hear of him unless they obtain a preacher, and they will never have one unless one is sent...So faith comes from what is preached, and what is preached comes from the word of Christ.”-Romans 10:14-17.

It is in the dispensing the Sacraments that Fr. Roger makes Christ present to the Church and the community. This is especially true of the Eucharist, the sacrament of the body and blood of Jesus Christ as St. Paul reminds us: “The blessing cup that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ, and the bread we break is a communion with the body of Christ. The fact that there is only one loaf means that, though we are many, we form a single body because we all have a share in this one loaf.” -1 Corinthians 10:15-18.

By answering the call to service, Fr. Roger has freely chosen to visibly manifest in a fuller and more effective manner our common priesthood in Christ, and to help us as we strive to become a New People, a new creation in our urgent quest for peace on this earth and among one another. It is all God’s work, and we are called to be ambassadors for Christ.

This is why we rejoice today. Fr. Roger and the community are called to foster peace, compassion, reconciliation, and service. It is commitment that is plagued by difficulties and is often disconcerting and full of personal risks. It is a ministry that is extremely relevant. If there is anything we desperately need today in our fragmented world, it is that we are to be persons of peace, love, and conviction promoting equality, diversity, and inclusivity of all races, ages, religions, political persuasions, economic status, and all of those who have and continue to immigrate to this great country of ours.

Millions of those who are marginalized must be supported, helped, and given their fair share of opportunities for success instead of being denied the opportunity to live fully human lives. Human rights are relevant for every human being. These are our Christian responsibilities of social justice which are deeply rooted in the Scriptures and flowing from the priestly ministry of Word and Sacrament. Thus, this calling will be the life pursuit of Fr. Roger and all of us because of our baptism are called to be priests, prophets, and kingly servant leaders. Because of this we gladly exclaim,

“Rejoice, O Jerusalem (Green Bay and Depere), and come together, all you who love her, rejoice with joy, you who have been in sorrow.”

Reflections of a Norbertine priest. An update of an essay I wrote on March 19, 2010.

I was steeped in the religious life for 25 years, remembering driving up the St. Norbert Abbey Road in August of 1959 with my father, mother, and sister. The years were wonderful, memorable, formative, challenging, educational, and spiritually enriching. Thirteen of us were given the habit to wear and formally received into the Order on August 28, the Feast of St. Augustine. I chose the religious name, Ignatius (we were later allowed to reclaim our baptismal name). Over the years, I nurtured many friends inside and outside of the Order, and still to this day we are in touch. Recently, I visited the Abbey cemetery, and I walked along the white tombstones, pausing, praying, and remembering something about each fellow Norbertine. I began my meditative walk at tombstone dated 1959 and continued to the present 2025 having passed 140 tombstones. Where did the time go? Each one did not go unnoticed. The poet, Auden writes that “death ends a life but not a relationship.” Often as Mary and I bike through the Abbey grounds, I quickly gaze at the white maze of memories.

My first year at the Abbey was known as the Novitiate, and was akin to a powder puff boot camp, and Fr. Al McBride was my novice master. In total there were about 120 of us from the Novitiate to Solemn Vow fraters. Our rooms were 8 by 10 feet which we cleaned weekly. We worked, studied(group discussions of the latest books in theology), played (touch football, baseball, tennis, swimming, racquetball, shot pool, and using the St. Norbert College gym and its facilities), acted in plays, washed dishes, set the tables for each next meal, painted, scrubbed floors, did yard work, gathered three times a day for Eucharist and Divine Office., and met for breakfast, lunch, and dinner while some of us, on a rotation basis, served the meals, did the dishes, and set the tables for the next round of meals. We ate in silence and used hand signs for the food and beverages to be passed, such as making a fist and gently pounding on the table for peanut butter. As we ate, the rule of St. Augustine was read in Latin. We began our day at 4:30 am, and a bell reminded us of “magnum silentium” (grand silence) at 9 pm and lights out at 10 pm. After the Novitiate were 8 years of academic rigors along with our work responsibilities, (I became an Abbey barber and I still cut my own hair), and scrubbing the floors of the nave of the church and polishing the marble floors of the sanctuary every Saturday in preparation for the High Mass on Sundays). I graduated from St. Norbert College in 1964 with a degree in philosophy, minors in psychology and Latin; we spent three more years of studies in scriptures,

various dimensions of theology, canon law, ethical principles and resolving dilemmas, homiletics, practicing the administration of the sacraments, catechesis in parishes, and involved in social justice programs in the community earning us an equivalency of a masters degrees (and over the next 17 years after ordination on March 19, 1968, I earned three more masters degrees in religious studies, spirituality, and counseling psychology – twice at Loyola University in Chicago and once at Fordham University in the Bronx. Again, my appreciation and thank you to the Order for encouraging and trusting in my academic abilities and enhancing my professionalism as a facilitator of learning.

My 17 years as a priest were happy, meaningful, and wholistically fulfilling (mind, body, heart, and soul). For 17 years I taught full time at Abbot Pennings High School in religion, psychology, and functioned as counselor for personal issues and plans for after graduation; and as needed I taught part-time at St. Norbert College in psychology and religious studies. For 10 years I drove to Sturgeon Bay weekly, to preside at the 4 pm and 8:30 am Masses at St. Joseph's Church along with assisting at Old St. Joseph Church, and other Green Bay parishes as needed. I spent much time preparing my homilies, and often I received positive feedback. I enjoyed participating in various parish programs during Advent and Lent, giving presentations, and retreats. I have authored numerous articles for various magazines such as Emmanuel, Review for Religious, Bible Today, and others. Then as of now, I visit residential care facilities. Enough of the former and more of the present.

Thank you to the Norbertine Order for its substantive, formative, academic. and spiritually enlightening years – now it is time to move on to June 1, 1985, and the celebration of our marriage.

Reflections of a married priest—written 2010 and updated.

I have been a married priest (canonically dispensed) for the past 40 years, (June 1, 1985). I have transitioned from a celibate life to a life of celebrating. For me, the letter “R” in Celebrate which is not in Celibate means Renewed, Redirected, Reaffirmed, and Resurrected, and is experienced in at least three ways as a married priest: 1. The spirituality of seconds; 2. Moments of Transcendence; and 3. The Cross is daily and the Resurrection is always a surprise.

Spirituality of Seconds: My lovely wife, Mary and our two delightful children, Josh and Andy, are the heartbeats of our life . We are a family, hearts beating together, yet apart. We are striving to communicate with the presence of God every second of the day which is a relentless endeavor. At times, we failed to reach such a level of spiritual

consciousness. Someone once said, “Life is messy my friend, come walk with me in the mud.” Nevertheless, our lives and our salvation are interwoven into the spirituality of seconds. God blessed us with our first son, Joshua Joseph, who was adopted. I wrote the following to “celebrate” this most happy event: “Joshua Joseph, you are the fulfillment of our yearnings, the creation of our dreams, and the completion of our beings. A young girl gifted and entrusted us with the heartbeat of her flesh and blood. She prays that we will embrace him with every ounce of our love, tenderness, gentleness, and care. We have chosen the name Joshua which means “God is our salvation.” God has surprised us with the miracle of his love. Joseph was my grandfather whom I loved, admired, and respected. Grandpa and Joshua were both born on January 18, the birthday of my grandfather, born in 1875 and died at the age of 83 years, and a day honoring Martin Luther King. Mary and I, like Martin Luther King Jr., had a dream which is now being fulfilled for God is “our” salvation. We share these chiseled words which were carved out of struggle, pain, and tears. We proclaim the good news with you, our friends, family, and those who have loved and supported us with your prayers and friendship.”

As the seconds of our life together melted away, we encountered God in another way with the birth of our natural son, Andrew John. (We were not supposed to have any natural children! That is what happens when we both relaxed and enjoyed our intimacy!) As my wife labored in pain, and I almost passed out, we experienced profound reverence and joy when Andy emerged into this life. As the seconds continued to slide around the face of the clock, I have come to appreciate God in the still, quiet moments of pre-dawn feedings. I have inhaled God in the messy diapers, reminding me of Jesus who was born in a stinky stable. Someday I may author an essay on the “Theological and sociological dimensions of Poop!” The seconds slid by as our family journeyed into the loving presence of God, for all the way to God is God. As a married priest with children, my marriage counseling had become more polished, insightful, effective, and empathic. If the Bishop were to give me a call and ask if I would be willing to help at a parish because of the priest shortage, I would say “yes” in a heartbeat. Just imagine how different my homilies would be and how I would be able to connect with the community of faith more intricately. The Vatican II documents emphasize that the “Eucharist is the fountain to which and from which we are spiritually nourished.” The theological teaching is fundamental to the essence of our spiritual lives as Christians, and yet the Magisterium continues to wear theological blinders, and deny the people of God access to Eucharist because of the shortage of priests. There is no shortage. It is estimated there are 250,000 married priests

worldwide. Someone will have to give an accounting to God for refusing to minister to the people of God. Jesus said, “Feed my lambs” not “Starve my lambs.”

Moments of Transcendence

For me, the Kingdom is Now as I lie next to my wife in bed, and we often hold hands which we love to do, especially coming up to communion together. Such a beautiful experience moved me to write the following: “Colors of Love” – “God, your passionate pursuit excites the shivering skin of our watery love. You tickle the depths of our souls; our hearts explode with silly laughter. Your Son, Jesus, whispers, ‘Chisel down your life; make it a pure work of art not an act of work. ‘Your Holy Spirit rustles the intimacy of our deeply rooted openness – longing for more love. A “trinity” of colors is splashed across the canvas of our lives – a rainbow is a rare gift in our spring-time love.”

The Cross is Daily – The Resurrection is always a Surprise.

Because my wife and I declared our love openly to the parish community, we experienced criticism, rejection, and discrimination by some persons (the world of the Catholic hierarchy and such people in positions of authority) when it came to apply for jobs in church-related areas such as religious education and teaching. During the first two years of our marriage, my wife and I lost a total of four jobs because our unblessed marriage would be giving scandal to the parish community if we were allowed to teach in a Catholic school or work as a religious education coordinator at a parish.

Today, family, friends, and acquaintances affirm, support, and affirm our marriage. It is perceived as an asset not a liability or scandal. It has made the parish community more aware, enlightened, and inspired by the witnessing of our love. Married priests can be available for others in time of need to share Eucharist, and to bond with celibate priests as co-ministers in building the Kingdom of God.

Shortage of Priests – Statistics

Here are some statistics according to Corpus Reports: Since the mid 1960’s, 100,000 priests worldwide (17,000 in USA) have married. I suspect that number has increased. The following U.S. statistics reflect First World patterns: The ration of parish priest per Catholic will change dramatically – from 1 to 1,750 today to 1 to 4,300 in the year 2000. Today, there are 30,000 active parish priests, average age is fifty-four. In 2000 there will be only 15,000 with an average of over sixty-five. The Catholic population will rise from 53 to 65 million during the interim. Resignations – The rate of resignations has remained the same over the past 14 years, namely: 20% resign within 10 years of ordination; 35% within 15 years; and 42% within 25 years. Today, half of the

American priests under age 60 are married. Concerning no-priest parishes – There are 19,500 U.S. parishes, 1 in 18 has no priest. Surveys in recent years favor a married priesthood that indicates a readiness on the part of the laity, 70%; the clergy, 60%, and the bishops, 25%.

Here I Am Lord!

As a married priest, I would gladly help alleviate the problems caused by the priest shortage. I would willingly help carry the crosses of celibate priests. In my former life as a religious, one of the vows I took was poverty, now I am living it! No, I would not ask for a place to live, a housekeeper, a stipend, or a car. I would be self-supporting, working a full-time career during the week. I am an instructor at a community college working with a vast array of students who are going to school, raising families or a single mom raising two children, working part-time or full-time while they struggle to make ends meet. I am doing as much healing ministry now than I was as a celibate priest. This dimension of service depends on the depth of one's spiritual life. I would be happy to help liturgically on weekends to alleviate some of the non-Eucharistic parish communities that are becoming more of a reality as more parishes are amalgamated. Dolores Curran, a nationally recognized educator (now deceased), recently spared a fire of debate in her syndicated column. The various titles the local editors gave her feature article, "Sorry, No Eucharist Today," made the point: "We're Losing the Eucharist!" "Many Are Called, Most Blocked," and "Sorry, Folks, the Sacraments Come in Second." The Catholic Messenger, Davenport, Iowa, editorialized that Curran's "shift of the crisis from the decline in the clergy to a loss of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is worth reflection." As the celebration of the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, what will happen to the fundamental action of the Risen Christ "to which and from which we are nourished and called to social action? What will happen to words of Jesus, "Do This in Remembrance of Me."

In conclusion, I strongly recommend to the Magisterium and the Bishop's Conference of the United States to offer the sacrament of Holy Orders to deacons, men, and women with the option of marrying before ordination, and invite the hundreds of thousands of married priests back into the sacramental ministry for those who choose to do so. The either/or no approach can be too confining, myopic, and does not leave adequate room for the complexity, individuality, uniqueness, and multiculturalism of humankind. I want to work side by side with those who willingly choose to remain celibate. It is their choice. Theologically, it is not essential to the sacramental nature of priesthood. I respect them, but I cannot be one of them. Together, we can celebrate our oneness and our uniqueness to allow the Holy Spirit to

create a virtual Pentecost once again. The Vatican II documents emphasize that the “Eucharist is the fountain to which and from which we are spiritually nourished.” Celibacy should not be used as a roadblock or a form of control by the Vatican to deny the people of God from having the grace-filled opportunity to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. Amen.