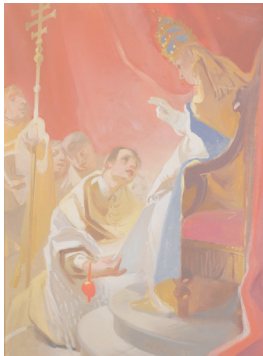


From Abbey to Xanten
A Glossary of Catholic and Norbertine Terms





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As part of our mission at St. Norbert College, we value and celebrate the importance of *communio*, a centuries-old charism of the Order of Premonstratensians (more commonly known as the Norbertines).

Communio is characterized by mutual esteem, trust, sincerity, faith and responsibility, and is lived through open dialogue, communication, consultation and collaboration.

In order for everyone to effectively engage in this ongoing dialogue, it is important that we share some of the same vocabulary and understand the concepts that shape our values as an institution. Because the college community is composed of people from diverse faith traditions and spiritual perspectives, this glossary explains a number of terms and concepts from the Catholic and Norbertine traditions with which some may not be familiar. We offer it as a guide to help people avoid those awkward moments one sometimes experiences when entering a new community – a place where people can appear to be speaking in code.

While the terms in this modest pamphlet are important, the definitions are limited and are best considered general indications of the meaning of the terms rather than a complete scholarly treatment.

We hope you find this useful! We welcome comments, as well as suggestions for additional terms to be considered for future editions.



When a word in a definition appears in bold type it indicates that the word is defined elsewhere in the glossary.

Abbey – A building that houses a religious community that is overseen by an **abbot** or **abbess**.

Abbot/Abbess – The male or female superior of a religious community. An abbot general – or the superior general – is the superior of a group of religious communities. The abbot general of the Norbertines lives in Rome.

Advent – The liturgical season leading up to Christmas, in which the church recalls the birth of Christ and spiritually prepares for Christ's Second Coming. The season is marked by the four Sundays leading up to Christmas.

Archbishop – A **bishop** of highest rank who heads an **archdiocese** or province.

Archdiocese – The **diocese** overseen by an **archbishop**. A jurisdiction or area composed of a number of regional dioceses under the direction of an archbishop is known as an **ecclesiastical** province.

Benedictine – A member of the religious community founded by St. Benedict.

Bishop – A member of the hierarchy responsible for the pastoral and administrative oversight of a **diocese**. He may be assisted by one or more auxiliary bishops.

Blessed Sacrament – The consecrated **host** (Body of Christ) reserved in the tabernacle (an ornamental receptacle for the reserved **Eucharist**) or displayed in a monstrance (a container in which the consecrated host is exposed for adoration).

Blesseds – Women and men who have been beatified (declared to be among the blessed and thus entitled to specific religious honor) by the Catholic Church, or proclaimed worthy of public veneration. **Norbertines** among those who have been beatified are Hugh, Hroznata, Henry, Herman, Gerard, Gertrude, Bronislava, James Kern, Johann Loelius, Macarius, Milo, Peter, Pontia, Radobo, Rivera, Peter Toulorge, Waltmann and Wilhelm.

Brother – A vowed member of a religious community of men within the Church. A brother takes vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. He shares in the life and mission of his community. He may serve in a variety of ministries but, unlike a priest, he may not preside over **sacraments**.



Canons Regular – Adherents to a model of religious life followed by a number of religious congregations, including the **Norbertines**. As canons regular, the **Norbertines** attempt to balance a life of prayer and community with a life of service.

Catechism – A text created for the universal Roman Catholic Church, promulgated by the Vatican, and containing the religious **doctrine** of the Church.

Catholic – Often used as a shorthand reference to the Roman Catholic Church or its members, the word “catholic” is a Greek term that literally means “universal.” It was first used in reference to the community of faith in a letter from St. Ignatius of Antioch in the year 107 A.D.

Catholic Intellectual Tradition – Upholds the value of both faith and reason, and calls us to an active dialogue between these sources of knowledge. Seeing God as actively involved in the world, this tradition affirms both the dignity of the human person and the goodness to be found in creation and culture. Further, this tradition sees the human enterprises of learning and working as contributing to creating a Gospel vision of justice.

Catholic Social Teaching – Encompasses aspects of Catholic doctrine relating to matters dealing with the collective welfare of humanity. The seven basic principles of Catholic social teaching are:

- Life and dignity of the human person
- Call to family, community and participation
- Rights and responsibility
- Option for the poor and vulnerable
- Dignity of work and rights of workers
- Solidarity
- Care for God’s creation

Charism – A distinct spirit that animates a religious order and gives it a particular character. The charisms of the religious community founded by Norbert of Xanten – the Norbertines – include **communio**, *actio* (action), *contemplatio* (contemplation) and **localitas**.

Common Good – This principle, central to Catholic social teaching, promotes the idea that social systems should be organized in ways that support human dignity and the ability of individuals to grow in community. In this view, the flourishing of the individual and the good of the community are intertwined.



Communio – A Norbertine **charism** that flows from the theological understanding that the **Trinitarian** God is a relational reality. Relationship is at the heart of the nature of God and we are called to live in ways that reflect the image in which we were created. Thus, our relationships strive for high standards including mutual esteem, trust, sincerity, faith, responsibility, open dialogue, communication, consultation and collaboration.

Communion – A common term that refers to the receiving of the **Eucharist** at **Mass**.

Consecration – The act through which the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

Deacon – Within the Roman Catholic tradition, an **ordained** male called to a ministry of service. Deacons are most often involved in assisting with liturgical responsibilities and in outreach efforts.

Diocese – A Church region under the pastoral guidance and governance of a **bishop**. There are five dioceses in Wisconsin: Green Bay, Madison, La Crosse, Superior and the **Archdiocese** of Milwaukee.

Divine Office – Also known as the **Liturgy of the Hours**, it is the public prayer of the Church that incorporates prayer, song, psalms and the reading of Scripture in order to praise God and sanctify the day. While morning and evening prayer are given prominence, there are seven times for prayer throughout the day.

Docere verbo et exemplo – The Latin term meaning “to teach by word and example” which has long been used by the **Norbertines**. It was officially adopted as the motto of St. Norbert College in 2007.

Doctrine – A belief or principle, or the whole body of such beliefs, authoritatively taught and passed on by the Catholic Church.

Dogma – The official teaching of the Catholic Church that is considered to be essential to the faith.

Dominican – A member of the religious community founded by St. Dominic.

Ecclesiastical – Relating or pertaining to the Church.



Ecumenical Church Councils – Gatherings of **bishops** from the worldwide Church that attend to matters of **doctrine** or discipline. To date there have been 21 such councils, the most recent of which was **Vatican II**. While all councils discuss matters of import, among the more famous are the Councils at Nicaea (325 CE) and Trent (1545-63 CE).

Ecumenism – The process of working toward unity among all Christian religions.

Encyclical – A letter written by the pope addressing a particular religious or moral topic. The letter is circulated throughout the universal Church and may address institutions and people outside the community of the Roman Catholic Church.

Eucharist – Derived from a Greek word meaning “thanksgiving,” this term is used to refer to the celebration of the Mass as a whole or to the **consecrated** bread and wine.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae (“**from the heart of the church**”) – A public decree written by Pope John Paul II that identifies the important characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities.

Father – Term commonly used in reference to an ordained Roman Catholic **priest**.

Franciscan – A member of the religious community founded by St. Francis.

Grotto – A cave-like, natural or artificial structure often associated with religious sites visited, generally, for private devotion or prayer.

Holy Days of Obligation – Specific dates on which Roman Catholics are expected to participate in **Mass**.

Holy Week – The last week of **Lent**, immediately preceding Easter, in which Christians remember, particularly, Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection.

Homily – A sermon.

Host – The bread that is used in the Christian ritual of the **Eucharist**.

Immaculate Conception – The belief that Mary was conceived and born in a state of grace, without original sin.



Infallibility – The teaching that holds that under certain circumstances the pope, and sometimes the whole body of **bishops** in union with the pope, is enabled by the presence of the Holy Spirit to teach without error in matters related to faith and morals. Not everything the pope says is free from error; he must explicitly define the teaching as infallible. In addition, it must relate to a matter of either faith or morals.

Jesuit – A member of the religious community founded by St. Ignatius.

Laity – Non-**ordained** members of the Church. Also known as the congregation, or parishioners, of a church.

Lent – The 40 days of fasting, prayer and almsgiving (charitable acts) before Easter. Lent starts on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Thursday.

Liturgical (Church) Year – The cycle of liturgical seasons in Christian churches which determines when feast days are to be observed and which portions of Scripture are to be read. The liturgical seasons in Christianity are:

- **Advent:** the four weeks leading up to Christmas.
- **Christmas:** the season that begins at Christmas and ends with the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord.
- **Ordinary Time:** the period after the Baptism of Our Lord until the beginning of Lent.
 - **Lent:** the 40 days of preparation for Easter.
 - **Triduum:** the liturgy that marks Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.
 - **Easter:** this season begins with Easter and ends with the Feast of Pentecost
 - **Ordinary Time:** the period after Pentecost until the beginning of Advent.

Liturgy – The act of Christian worship.

Liturgy of the Hours – See **Divine Office**.

Localitas – On the day of profession a **Norbertine** offers and gives himself to a specific church and is immediately incorporated into a certain Norbertine community. This term also refers to the commitment a Norbertine community has over many generations to serve the particular spiritual needs of the local community.

Mandatum – An acknowledgement, by Church authority, that a professor of theological or related disciplines has agreed to accurately and faithfully present official Catholic teaching. The matter of seeking or receiving a mandatum is considered a private matter between the local **bishop** and the faculty member.



Mass – Refers to the **Eucharistic** celebration made up of the **Liturgy** of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Norbert of Xanten – Founder of the **Order of Premonstratensians**, a religious community of **canons regular**, more commonly known as **Norbertines**.

Norbertine – A member of the Catholic religious order of **canons regular** founded at **Prémontré**, France, in 1120 by **Norbert of Xanten**.

Norbertine Associate – A member of a group of lay people, joined together by a common desire to commit themselves to Christ through the life and work of the **Norbertine** community; in so doing they hope to increase their service to God and their sisters and brothers, and find mutual support in each other.

O.Praem. – The suffix designation for **Norbertines**. O.Praem. is an abbreviation for *ordinis Praemonstratensis* (referring to the Order of **Premonstratensians**.)

Ordained – To become officially authorized by a church or religious organization to provide leadership to the community. In the Catholic Church, men are ordained as **deacons**, **priests** and **bishops**.

Parish – A Church community most often led by a **priest** who serves as pastor.

Prémontré – The town in France where Norbert of Xanten founded his religious community.

Premonstratensian – See Norbertine.

Priest – An **ordained** member of the Roman Catholic clergy.

Prior/Prioress – The male or female superior of a **priory** or the primary assistant to the **abbot** or **abbess** in a religious community.

Priory – A house of religious men or women that is connected to an **abbey**. An abbey, often considered a mother house, oversees priories, often called dependent houses because they are dependent on the abbey for governance and financial support.

Religious – In its adjective form, this refers to belief in and worship of God. In its noun form it refers to members of a religious order.

Reverend – A term of respect used as the formal title for members of the clergy.



Rosary – A Catholic devotion that consists of the recitation of 20 prayers. The prayers are divided into four groups of five, known as the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous Mysteries, which focus on the life, ministry, passion and glorification of Christ. As an aid to memory, the prayers are counted on a string of beads, which also are commonly referred to as rosary beads.

Rule of Augustine – Written around the year 400 CE, this is one of the earliest guides for religious life. It is divided into eight chapters and covers such topics as common life, prayer, fraternal correction and forgiveness. It is this rule that **Norbert of Xanten** adopted when he founded his religious community.

Sacrament – Commonly refers to the seven prayer rituals that are based upon the ministry of Jesus: baptism, reconciliation (confession), Holy **Communion**, confirmation, marriage, holy orders (**ordination**), and anointing of the sick.

Sacramental Worldview – Recognizes God is present and active in the world today. This leads us to approach persons, creation and culture with optimism and reverence, believing they can reveal aspects of God's goodness.

Sacred Hour – One hour set aside each week at St. Norbert College for individual and communal prayer or reflection, embodying the **Norbertine** value of contemplation and prayer as a community.

Saint – A person who is formally recognized (canonized) by the Catholic Church as an exemplar of holiness in following Christ. **Norbertine** saints are Norbert, Godfrey, Frederic, Gerlac, Evermode, Ludolph, Hermann-Joseph, Isfrid, Adrian, James, Gilbert, Giselbert, Hedwig, Hildegund, Petronilla, Richard and Siard.

St. Norbert – See **Norbert of Xanten**.

Sister – A woman in a religious order who takes solemn vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Stations of the Cross – A prayerful devotion through which an individual or group meditates on the story of Jesus' journey to the Crucifixion. There is more than one form of the Stations; some forms include the Resurrection as the final station.

Tradition – Along with Scripture, considered the means by which Christ's revelation is passed down through the generations.



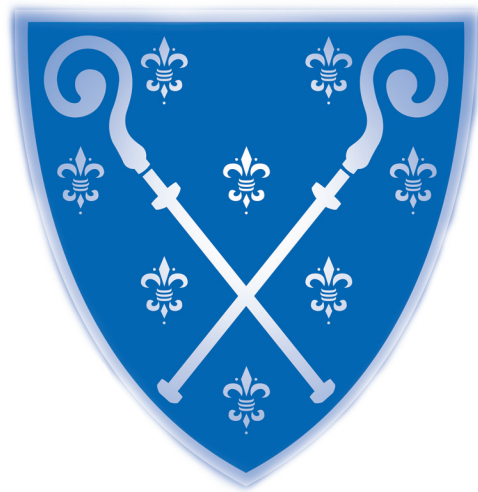
Transubstantiation – Teaching that, when **consecrated**, the bread and wine used for **Communion** become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This is also referred to as the Real Presence of Christ in the **Eucharist**.

Trinitarian – Believing or professing belief in the Christian Trinity or the Trinity, which asserts there is one God in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Vatican II – An **ecumenical Church council** convened from 1962–1965. The council sought to define the nature, scope and mission of the Catholic Church in the modern world.

Xanten – The town in Germany where Norbert was educated. St. Norbert is often referred to as Norbert of Xanten.

If there are other terms or concepts you would like to learn more about that are not covered in this guide, please feel free to contact Mission and Ministry at (920) 403-3155 or ministry@snc.edu.



*St. Norbert College,
a Catholic liberal arts
college embracing the
Norbertine ideal of
communio, provides an
educational environment
that fosters intellectual,
spiritual and personal
development.*

