



# Vocation Connections

## Vocation:

“Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am.”

— Parker J. Palmer,  
*Let Your Life Speak:  
Listening for the Voice  
of Vocation*

## Out of Many Becoming One

Delivered by Fr. Andrew Ciferni, O. Praem. as a reflection at the August 28th Common Gathering, “Let Us Love One Another.”

A poem: *With That Moon Language*

*Admit something:*

*Everyone you see, you say to them, "Love me."*

*Of course you do not do this out loud, otherwise someone would call the cops.*

*Still, though, think about this, this great pull in us to connect.*

*Why not become the one who lives with a full moon in each eye*

*that is always saying,*

*with that sweet moon language,*

*what every other eye in this world is dying to hear?*

This poem by Hafez, a 14th-century Persian mystic and poet, is quoted by Jesuit Father Gregory Boyle in his book *Tattoos on the Heart*, the memoir of his work among the gangs of Los Angeles. Hafez and Boyle articulate our base line human desire to be loved and to love.

At the top of St. Augustine’s (+ 430) *Rule of Life* the Norbertines seek to live by, we read:

*Let us love God above all things, dearest brothers and sisters, then our neighbor, for these are the chief commandments given to us.... The first purpose for which you have come together is to live in unity in the house and to be of one mind and one heart on the way to God.*

St Norbert College is a place where for 115 years men and women have been moved by the foundational dream of living according to the apostles’ teaching, seeking to be faithful to the *communio* expressed in the breaking of bread at altar and dining hall sharing, according to each other’s needs and with glad and sincere hearts, one another’s knowledge, insight and wisdom, praising God and enjoying the favor of the people (*Acts 2:42 – 47*). This is the Jerusalem dream.

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This a dream always seeking greater fulfillment. It's a dream men and women across the ages have not attended to or, at times, even perceived as a nightmare. So God in every age raises up men and women who call us to make a dream a reality. St. Augustine proposed that this way of life of men and women following a Rule of Life based on the Jerusalem dream would provide a model for a church that was to be a model for a one-heart-one-mind world.

St. Norbert picked up the dream and his monasteries were like villages served by a community of ministers. Abbot Pennings carried the dream across the ocean to the side of this river where what he began at a kitchen table now looks like it has become a site for dueling construction cranes! And what of us? How will we in this year focused in some small way on *Diligamus Invicem* (*Let us love one another*), how will we embody the gospel command to love one another? St. Augustine proposed the way of friendship. He could not live without friends. In his *Confessions* he wrote a moving marvelous description of friendship. Imagine it as a dream of life in Michels or Sensenbrenner or MMM. Dare to imagine a nation or – perhaps beyond our imagining, -- a world, in which every person of every race, age, sexual orientation, economic prosperity or poverty, disability or athletic prowess lived in this mode of friendship penned by Augustine in his *Confessions* (*Confessions Book IV.8.13*):

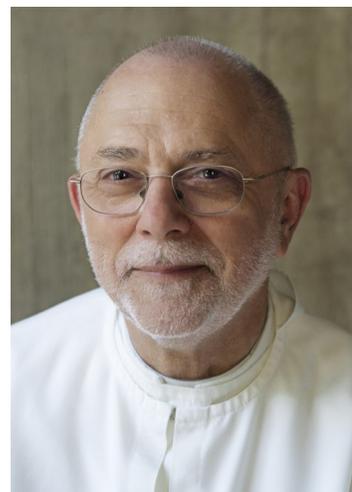
*There are [ ] joys to be found in the company of friends which [can] still more powerfully captivate my mind – the charms of talking and laughing together and kindly giving way to each other's wishes, reading elegantly written books together, sharing jokes and delighting to honor one another, disagreeing occasionally but without rancor, as a person might disagree with oneself, and lending spice by that rare disagreement to our much more frequent accord. We will teach and learn from each other, sadly missing any who might be absent and lightheartedly welcoming them when they return. Such signs of friendship spring from the hearts of friends who love and know their love returned, signs to be read in smiles, words, glances and a thousand gracious gestures. So are sparks kindled and our minds become fused inseparably, out of many becoming one.*

OUT OF MANY BECOMING ONE.

What a dream for our world, our nation, our church, our college.

*Andrew D. Ciferni, O.Praem.*

Director, Center for Norbertine Studies



## What Our Students Are Doing

### Vocation Exploration Group

FLV provides scholarship support for eight students actively exploring the work to which they may be called. Through this year-long experience students read, reflect, discuss, develop, and write about their understanding of calling. In this process they develop a deeper understanding of the concept of vocation as well as the ways in which they may be called to live and work in the world.

### OMG! I'm A Senior!

Where am I going? How do I get there?  
Who is there to help?

In its 4th year, this popular event features faculty panelists telling stories from their own journeys and offering advice to our seniors.

November 11, 2013 8pm-9pm  
Todd Wehr Hall

### Meet the 2013-14 ALIVE Team



## Faculty and Staff Offerings

### The Calls of Teaching and Scholarship

January 23, 2014 11:30am-5:00pm  
Designed for our faculty colleagues, this afternoon focuses on how faculty can balance the demands of these two worthy callings.

### Retreat Seminar

May 20-22, 2014

Our retreat seminar on vocation returns this May. Join your colleagues in exploring vocation as a meaningful concept for ourselves and our students. Space is limited; registration begins in early January.

### Voices of Calling

Coming in spring!

A new series of conversations for faculty and staff. Enjoy hospitality while hearing the vocation stories of campus and community friends.

### Mentoring Workshops

Available to any area or department who would like a personalized workshop on mentoring or supervising students from a vocation perspective. FLV can take the show on the road!

# The Journey

By Mary Oliver

One day you finally knew  
what you had to do, and began,  
though the voices around you  
kept shouting  
their bad advice —  
though the whole house  
began to tremble  
and you felt the old tug  
at your ankles.  
“Mend my life!”  
each voice cried.  
But you didn’t stop.  
You knew what you had to do,  
though the wind pried  
with its stiff fingers  
at the very foundations —  
though their melancholy  
was terrible.

It was already late  
enough, and a wild night,  
and the road full of fallen  
branches and stones.  
But little by little,  
as you left their voices behind,  
the stars began to burn  
through the sheets of clouds,  
and there was a new voice,  
which you slowly  
recognized as your own,  
that kept you company  
as you strode deeper and deeper  
into the world,  
determined to do  
the only thing you could do —  
determined to save  
the only life you could save.

*Vocation Connections* is an occasional newsletter published by the Program of Faith, Learning & Vocation.  
We invite your comments, suggestions, and contributions.

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