



# COMMUNIO ROMANA

Newsletter of the Premonstratensian College in Rome

May 2026 | No. 1

## Message from the Rector

Dear friends in Christ,

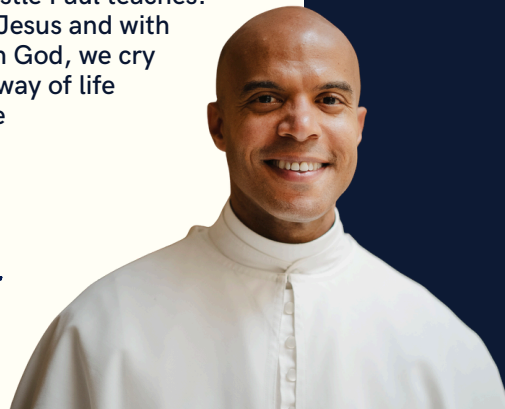
With great joy, we present the first issue of this newsletter, conceived as a tool to better connect members of our Norbertine family throughout the world by communicating the specific ways in which we live out our shared charism here in Rome at our Order's international house of studies. Four hundred years ago, a small group of confreres from Tongerlo Abbey opened Collegium Sancti Norberti de Urbe in a rented building near Piazza del Popolo. Today, our Order's Collegio has ten times as many students and is located within the Generalate on the top of the Little Aventine Hill in Rome.

The initiative of this newsletter seeks to strengthen bonds that already exist between us and to create new opportunities for awareness, appreciation, and collaboration as we live our vocation as disciples of Christ. In these pages, you will find prayers, testimonies, formative content, and news regarding events that reflect the rich diversity of our charism of *Communio*. Each contribution is an invitation to rediscover our common identity as followers of Christ and to renew our commitment to living and proclaiming his Gospel.

This newsletter is ordered towards the deepening of our sense of belonging one to another as members of the Church universal. The Collegio this year is composed of 33 men from 21 countries. As the Apostle Paul teaches: "God is faithful and has called us into fellowship with Jesus and with one another" (cf. 1 Cor 1:9). We journey together with God, we cry out together to God, and listen together to God. This way of life and way of being the Church is God's gift to us that we might share it with others. *Oremus pro invicem.*

In the Risen Lord,

*Claude Williams, O.Praem.*  
Father Claude Williams, O.Praem.  
Rector



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*“Love is itself the fulfillment of all our works.”*

*Saint Augustine*

## *Gratitude and Mercy*

**Sister Mary John Paul Asemota, O.Praem.**

The Scriptures present gratitude or thanksgiving as a fundamental attitude of the human heart. As an attitude is a disposition for action, arising from an intellect enriched by truth and from a heart purified and enlightened by beauty and goodness, gratitude is a readiness for love. It is the fitting response to the knowledge that all that we are and all that we have is a pure and gratuitous gift from the Father of lights.

Of all the gifts we receive from God, the greatest after God himself and our own existence is the gift of another person. Gratitude for our neighbor—every person, and especially those entrusted to us in one way or another—is the fruit of purity of heart. If we see God in our neighbor, then we will love our neighbor. And, as we like our neighbors, are broken and sinful, gratitude for our neighbor is expressed concretely in mercy.

Mercy “is patient and kind; it does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor. 13:4-7).



Mercy is at the heart of our Norbertine life. It is through gratitude, made concrete in a heart’s merciful gaze, that we live our charism and mission of actualizing communio. The Eucharist is thanksgiving, gratitude at its deepest level; it is also the outpouring of Mercy. When we eat his flesh and drink his blood, he “pours upon us all of his mercy and his love, so as to renew our hearts, our lives and our way of relating with him and with the brethren.” (Pope Francis, General Audience, 5 February 2014).



“  
*Gratitude is the fitting response to the knowledge that all that we are and all that we have is a pure and gratuitous gift*  
”

Sister Mary John Paul Asemota, O.Praem., entered the Norbertine Canonry of Tehachapi, California, in 2000. Currently, she serves as sub-prioress in her community. In 2025 she was elected President of the Federation of Norbertine Canonesses. In this capacity, Sister was recently in Rome for meetings at the Vatican and stayed as a guest of the college.

# Community: Lived and Celebrated

FATHER VITUS GLIRA, O.PRAEM.

Liturgy is understood as a celebration of and within community, yet it remains cautious about explicitly emphasising community and does not use the word frequently in its texts. Applied to everyday life, this liturgical insight can suggest that community comes about and becomes tangible through the way people interact in their daily lives, which in turn brings them together in (liturgical) celebration.

It is part of the customs at our Collegio San Norberto that the priests living in the house take turns presiding at the celebration of the Eucharist. In doing so, they also keep alive the sense among those celebrating that they are a community gathered together by Christ in the Holy Spirit.

The opening rites, in particular, are intended to contribute to the growth of liturgical communion. We may therefore ask how these moments from the liturgy are reflected in our communal life and inspire it, so that it is experienced as a community in which our togetherness is continually marked by moments of celebration.

The presider's opening words in the Eucharistic celebration convey a greeting of attention. The act of penance involves the expression and confession of personal or collective failings. Yet in doing so, he qualifies the assembly for the celebration of human and divine communion itself as a space in which not only success stories count, but where our struggles, futilities and negligence can also find expression and encounter a willingness to forgive.

Just as those gathered for the liturgy prepare themselves through prayer from this experience to then listen to God's Word and celebrate the Eucharist, so too may communal prayer prepare communal life to listen attentively to one another and respond, and to live as a community from our mutual gifts - transformed in the Spirit of God.



Members of Collegio San Norberto open the school year with Eucharist at the Church of Saint Agatha of the Goths in Rome.

I look back with gratitude on the shared experiences of this kind since my arrival in January: the sense of warmth and willingness to listen, conversations that offered encouragement and support, patience with my (linguistic) shortcomings, sharing wonderful experiences, and the enrichment brought by the contributions of others, including for me!



Fathers Štěpán J. Tichý (Strahov), Vitus Glira (Schlägl) and Paul Schexnayder (Orange).

# NEWS

## LEADERSHIP & SYNODALITY

In March 2025, Father Claude Williams, Rector of Collegio San Norberto, led two days of leadership training for the Ursulines of the Roman Union and the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. Titled "He Walks With Us: Synodality in Communities of Religious," the sessions explored scripture and governance. Reflecting on this theme, Pope Leo XIV recently noted that synodality is "a way of describing how we can come together and be a community and seek communion as Church".

### *Youth and Cardinal Battaglia*

In April 2025, Father Rector, Frater Titus, and the college community welcomed 300 Neapolitan teenagers and their chaperones for a meeting with Cardinal Domenico Battaglia. The Cardinal sat on the front steps of our building, surrounded by young people, for a lively afternoon of singing, testimony, and shared dialogue.

### *Audience with Pope Leo XIV*

Student Body Vice President Father Lawrence Ifire, a priest of the Diocese of Kakamega in Kenya, in November 2025 met Pope Leo XIV along with other students of Liturgy from the Anselmianum. Referencing Pope Francis' Motu Proprio *Desiderio Desideravi*, the Holy Father encouraged those gathered to promote the study of Liturgy and to continue to foster the full, active participation of the faithful in Eucharistic celebrations.

### *The 400th Jubilee Inauguration*

In January 2026 Cardinal Stephen Brislin of Johannesburg presided over Vespers for the Epiphany. This was part of the inauguration of the 400th Jubilee Year of Collegio San Norberto. Founded in October 1626 near Piazza del Popolo by Father Cosmas Dillen and three other Norbertines from Tongerlo, the College now celebrates four centuries of history. The Cardinal encouraged the community to keep the spirit of Communion alive in a polarized, war-torn world.

# A Message of Gratitude from Collegio San Norberto



## Dear Friends and Benefactors

As we reflect on the graces of this past academic year, our hearts are filled with gratitude for your presence in our lives. At Collegio San Norberto, we believe that our mission is sustained most of all by the spiritual bonds that unite us.

## Our Deepest Thanks

First and foremost, we thank you for your daily prayers. They are the foundation of our community, providing the spiritual strength necessary for our residents to pursue their vocations with joy and perseverance.

We are also grateful for your financial generosity. Since July 2025, we have received over €95,000 in donations to the Order to support the work of Collegio San Norberto. Several of you donated while you were visiting Rome and interacting with us here in the College. These contributions have been instrumental in advancing our shared mission.

## Your Impact

Your support directly fuels the life of the Collegio in several vital ways:

- **Fostering Communio:** Creating a true home for all our members, including our guests who are not members of the Order, ensuring a spirit of brotherhood and welcome.
- **Ongoing Formation:** Providing the necessary resources for the intellectual and spiritual growth of the clergy.
- **Pastoral Service:** Supporting the practical and pastoral needs of our members as they prepare to serve the wider Church.



*"May the Lord reward you for your kindness and keep you always in His care."*

## Continuing Our Journey Together

We invite you to continue walking with us. Your prayers remain our greatest treasure, and your financial support ensures that Premonstratensian College remains a center of formation and service. If you sense a call to contribute this year, please find the donation details below:

### For Donations in US Dollars:

Please send a check made out to: Norbertine Generalate, Inc.  
Mailing Address:  
St. Norbert Abbey  
1016 North Broadway Avenue  
De Pere, Wisconsin 54115

With our prayers and deepest appreciation,

**The Community of Collegio San Norberto**

### For Donations in Euro:

Owner: Procura gen. dei Canonici Regolari Premostratensi  
Viale Giotto 27, 00153 Roma, Italia

### Bank Details

**Bank** Unicredit Italia (Viale Aventino 21, Roma)

**IBAN** IT05G0200805012000102198209

**BIC/SWIFT** UNCRITM1B89



## JUBILEE PRAYER

O God, source of all goodness, we ask you to pour out your mercy upon Collegio San Norberto in Rome and upon all who reside here.

We pray that your Holy Spirit may watch over this dwelling, keeping all who live here safe from everything that is evil or divisive. May this College be a true place of welcome and daily refreshment for the men who dwell within its walls.

May the spirit of brotherhood flourish here, forming a city fortified in Christ—a place where the brothers, helping one another, may build each other up in faith and charity.

Grant to those who are in this College the grace that maturity and learning may increase among us, always accompanied by humility and gratitude. May the gift of Communion, which is your divine gift and the precious charism of our Premonstratensian family, shine brightly in this community in Rome. May our witness become a beacon for the edification of the whole Church.

Grant us spiritual health and wisdom, giving us, from your generous hand and through the intercession of your Virgin Mother, all that we need to live with justice and wisdom in your service. Walk with all of us in this community who find ourselves in need or in difficulty of any kind.

May Collegio San Norberto be recognized as a place of joy and understanding, where the goodness of Christ is made incarnate for each of us who lives here and for all who visit.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



*Fathers Paul Schexnayder and Ambrose Criste (Orange),  
Abbot General Jos Wouters (Averbode), and Father Shaju  
Vadakkumkara (Mananthavady).*



*Scan and visit our website if you  
would like to learn more about  
us or get in touch.*

**Collegio San Norberto - Rome**

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