

ST. NORBERT, APOSTLE OF THE EUCHARIST

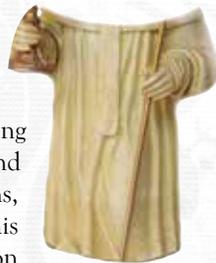
A description of the significance of each element of this original statue designed by the Norbertine Canonesses



✿ St. Norbert was archbishop of Magdeburg (eastern Germany) and so this statue depicts him with a *miter*, a ceremonial headdress proper to bishops and abbots; an *archiepiscopal cross* (*crozier*), which symbolizes the authority of the spiritual “shepherd” of the local church and his hierarichal rank; and the *pallium*, a liturgical vestment symbolizing both the fullness of the episcopal office and personal loyalty to the pope.



✿ Norbert is also wearing a *rochet*, a linen knee-length liturgical garment proper to high-ranking clerics (bishops and abbots) and to canons, in reference to his famous admonition that his canons should always wear linen around the altar (i.e. during liturgical celebrations) as a sign of reverence for the Holy Eucharist.



✿ Norbert’s hair is *tonsured*, as according to the contemporary ecclesiastical custom, canons were tonsured while lay brothers were not. This priestly practice, originating in the fifth-sixth century, involved a shaving of the head, or a part of it, symbolic of the Lord’s crown of thorns.



✿ One of the most outstanding examples of Norbert’s apostolic zeal for the Holy Eucharist came in response to the heresy of a man named *Tanchelm*, whose head Norbert crushes with his foot, reminiscent of Our Lady crushing the head of the serpent (cf. Gen. 3:15). Tanchelm rejected Church authority, and, beginning about 1100 in the area of the Netherlands, preached violently against the Mass and the Holy Eucharist, falsely claiming that the efficacy of the Sacraments was based on the worthiness of the minister. Norbert and his followers successfully opposed this heresy especially in the city of Antwerp in 1119.



*Saint Norbert,
Apostle of the
Eucharist,
Pray For Us!*

As “Apostle of the Eucharist,” Norbert’s reverent gaze is fixed on the monstrance in his right hand.

Many of the miracles recounted of St. Norbert took place in the context of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: miracles of healing, of exorcism and of reconciliation. In fact, St. Norbert insisted on celebrating Mass before undertaking any work, so great was his faith in the power of the Eucharist. At the beginning of his conversion, when he had given away literally everything he owned, he retained only the articles

necessary for celebrating Mass as he traveled on foot across Europe. This was so that he could have the Eucharist daily, although it was not common practice for priests to celebrate so often. The monstrance did not actually come into use until much later, but during the troubled times of the Protestant revolt it became an artistic expression of St. Norbert’s well-known Eucharistic devotion.

