

this made him many enemies and he was almost assassinated. Disgusted with the citizens desire to keep to their old ways, he left the city, but was soon called back—not because the citizens missed him but because the emperor and the pope pressured them.

When two rival popes were elected after the death of Honorius II, Norbert helped try to heal the Church by getting his admirer the emperor to support the first elected, Innocent II. At the end of his life he was made an archbishop but he died soon after on June 6, 1134 at the age of 53. \*(excerpted from: www.catholic.org)

**\*\*PRAYER TO SAINT NORBERT**

Ever silently repeating,  
"Love for Thee, and Thee alone;"  
Ever, 'mid dark shadows, meeting  
Starlight from Our Lady's throne;

Ever on her Aves dwelling  
When the foes grew loud and strong;  
Ever from his heart was swelling  
Mary's praise in one sweet song.

O Saint Norbert, may thy spirit  
Live in us till Mary's hand  
Lead thy children home—for ever  
Sheltered in the changeless land.

"I hail thee, O Virgin, who, preserved by the Holy Ghost,  
hast triumphed over the formidable sin of our  
first parents, without being tainted by it."

*(From the Office of Saint Norbert)*

\*\* (excerpted from: catholicarboroffaithandmorals.com)

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## ***Saint Norbert***

**Feast Day: June 6**



**Apostle of the Eucharist**

**And**

**Founder of the Order of Canons Regular of Prémontré**

## Saint Norbert

\*St. Norbert was born at Zanten in the Rhineland, about the year 1080. The early part of his life was devoted to the world and its pleasures. He entered upon the ecclesiastical state in a worldly spirit.

The thunderstorm had boiled up suddenly as Norbert was out riding. Norbert, who had always chosen the easy way, would never have deliberately gone on a journey that promised danger, risk, or discomfort. He had moved easily from the comforts of the noble family he was born into at about 1080 to the pleasure-loving German court. He had no hesitations about joining in any opportunity to enjoy himself, no matter what the source of that pleasure. To ensure his success at court, he also had no qualms about accepting holy orders as a canon and implied responsibilities that came with that vocation.

But now high winds pushed and pulled at his fashionable coif, rain slashed at his fancy clothes, and dark rolling clouds pressed night down upon his light thoughts. A sudden flash of lightning split the dark and his horse bucked, throwing Norbert to the ground.

For almost an hour, the still form of the courtier lay unmoving. Even the rain soaking his clothes and the howl of thunder did not bring him back to consciousness and life. When he awoke his first words were, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" —the same words Saul spoke on the road to Damascus. In response Norbert heard in his heart, "Turn from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it."

He immediately returned to the place of his birth, Xanten, to devote himself to prayer and penance. He now embraced the instruction for the priesthood he had avoided and was ordained in 1115. His complete conversion and new ways caused some to denounce the former courtier as a hypocrite. Norbert's response was to give everything he owned to the poor and to go to the pope for permission to preach.

With this commission in hand, he became an itinerant preacher, traveling throughout Europe with his two companions. In an extreme response to his old ways, he now chose the most difficult ways to travel—walking, barefoot in the middle of winter through snow and ice. Unfortunately the two companions who followed him died from the ill-effects of exposure. But Norbert was gaining the respect of those sincere clerics who had despised him before. The bishop of Laon wanted Norbert to help reform the canons in his see, but the canons wanted nothing to do with Norbert's type of reform which they saw as far too strict. The bishop, not wanting to lose this holy man, offered Norbert land where he could start his own community. In a lonely valley called Prémontré, he began his community with thirteen canons. Despite the strictness of his regulation, or perhaps because of it, his reforms attracted many disciples until eight abbeys and two convents were involved. Even the canons who had originally rejected him asked to be part of the reform.

In Norbert's community we have the first evidence of lay affiliation with a religious order. This came about when a count Theobald wanted to join Norbert. Norbert realized that Theobald was not called to holy orders but to marriage and worldly duties. But he did not entirely reject Theobald, giving him a rule and devotions as well as a scapular to wear to identify him as part of the community.

It was on the trip accompanying Theobald to his marriage, that Norbert was spotted by Emperor Lothair and chosen as bishop of Magdebourg. Legend has it the porter refused to let Norbert into his new residence, assuming he was a beggar. When the crowd pointed out to the flustered porter that this was the new bishop Norbert told the porter, "You were right the first time." Norbert carried the love of reform that he had found in his own life to his new diocese. As usual,