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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**The Norbertine Community of New Mexico  
Celebrates Its Independence  
*Elevated to New Canonry***

ALBUQUERQUE – Tuesday, December 13, 2011 –IMMEDIATE RELEASE-- On December 12, 2011, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Norbertine Community of New Mexico celebrated its independence as it was “elevated to a new canonry.”

*After twenty-six years serving the church in New Mexico, we have reached this milestone, which means that we will now be self-governing and independent of our mother abbey, St. Norbert Abbey in Wisconsin, while maintaining close ties of friendship with our brothers there.”* Fr. Joel Garner, O.Praem., Superior , Norbertine Community of New Mexico

Celebrating the Priory’s independence were Archbishop Michael Sheehan, Abbot Gary Neville, O.Praem. of St. Norbert Abbey, Abbot Richard Antonucci, O.Praem. of Daylesford Abbey near Philadelphia, and Abbot Eugene Hayes, O.Praem. of St. Michael’s Abbey in Orange, CA, as well as friends, Oblates and Associates of the local community.

The Priory of Santa Maria de la Vid (Our Lady of the Vine), the religious community’s home in the South Valley, currently has 14 members, four of whom are in formation. The Norbertines serve the parishes of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary in Albuquerque, St. Augustine at Isleta Pueblo, and Our Lady of Belen, as well as in hospital ministry and other sacramental and social action capacities.

The Norbertines, or Premonstratensians as they are formally known, were founded almost 900 years ago in Prémontré, France. On Christmas Day 1121, Norbert of Xanten and his friends inaugurated the Canons Regular of Prémontré. They dedicated themselves to seeking Christ by means of community living, poverty, obedience, celibacy and a dedication to the active priestly ministry. Norbert held before them the dream of the first Christians after Pentecost whose community life was characterized by the power of the Spirit and a desire to be of service to others. Unlike monks whose ministry and life was confined to the monastery, this new Order of Canons Regular would serve in parish and other ministries, and live together in community, gathering daily for prayer in common.

Today the Norbertines number approximately 1,300 worldwide and serve in Europe, Australia, South America, Canada, India, Africa and the United States. The “golden triangle” of community, contemplation and compassionate service is the guiding force of their lives as they strive, according to the Rule of Saint Augustine which they follow, to “be of one mind and heart on the way to God.”

The Norbertines’ home in Albuquerque’s South Valley is also the location of St. Norbert College’s Master of Theological Studies program in New Mexico, and the home of the Norbertine Hermitage Retreat and The Norbertine Library which are open to the public. For more information on these resources, please go to [www.norbertinecommunity.org](http://www.norbertinecommunity.org). or call 505.873.4399.--END

[www.archdiosf.org](http://www.archdiosf.org)

