

Lives of Norbertine Saints

(This was composed at Corpus Christi Priory in Manchester, England in 1904.)

(As this was scanned into a computer, there may be errors, as I have not had the chance to edit it thoroughly. I thought it was better to have it available to you sooner than later. I will eventually replace this with a thoroughly edited version.)

Introductory

THE Order of Premonstratensians or White Canons was founded by St. Norbert in 1120; it has consequently a history of nearly 800 years. Three elements constitute an Order of Canons Regular, viz, the clerical dignity, the religious state, and stability or permanent service in a particular church to which the Canon is attached. Community life, the Divine Office sung publicly and in the name of the Church, and the care of souls form the three ends which all Orders of Canons have in common, though they do not attain them by the same means or in the same manner. To these particular ends St. Norbert added fasting and other works of penance, together with certain works of piety peculiar to Monastic Orders, or characteristic of his own institution, The five particular or characteristic ends of the Norbertine Order are: the singing of the Divine Office, zeal for the salvation of souls, the spirit of habitual penance, devotion to the Bl. Sacrament, and devotion to Our Lady, the special Patron and Protectress of the Order. The Order, founded in 1120, increased very rapidly and, in the words of the English Pope Adrian IV, shining with great glory of merits and edifying with the grace of holiness spread its branches from sea to sea. It contained, and still contains, the three following classes or orders: 1 of priest, clerics, lay brothers, donates under an Abbot; 2 of nuns; 3 of so-called tertiaries. At one time the Order numbered above a thousand Abbeys or nunneries, in all parts of the then known world. Owing to the Reformation and the various revolutions, the number of Norbertine Houses has greatly decreased. At present (*i.e.* 1904) Norbertine Houses are found in Europe: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Italy & Spain; in N. and S. America: the United States, Canada & Brazil; and in the Congo State of Africa. During a period of nearly 800 years the Order has given numerous bishops, martyrs, confessors, and holy nuns to the Church Some of these have been canonized or beatified by the Holy See; others - and very large is their number - though honored as Saints by the voice of the people and described as such by numerous authors in their Lives of the Saints, have not yet received the honors of the altar. It is remarkable how frequently these authors, the Bollandists for instance, hare mentioned this seeming too great neglect of the Order in promoting the cause of Beatification of its sons and daughters, whose holiness has been manifested by miracles and proclaimed by the voice of the faithful and whose cultus from time immemorial is proved from authentic sources. These holy men and women constitute the brightest glory of the Norbertine Family; they are also our models in this life and our protectors before God's throne.

To make their Lives better known, to glorify their names, to merit their intercession - such is the object of this Series of short Lives of Norbertine Saints of which the present little volume is the first number. In obedience to the decrees of the Council of Trent and of Pope Urban VIII, the author declares that he humbly submits whatever he has written to the judgment of the Apostolic See, and that in giving the title of Saint or Blessed to any person not yet canonized, he only writes according to the usage and opinion of men.

ST. NORBERT was born at Santen in Germany in 1080, that is, during the troubled pontificate of St. Gregory VII and the contentious reign of Henry IV. Emperor of Germany. His father Heribert, Count of Gennep, was related to the Imperial House of Germany and his mother, Hedwigis, was a descendant of the ancient House of Lorraine, shortly before the birth of St. Norbert his mother heard a voice from Heaven, saying: Be of good courage, Hedwigis, for you will be the mother of a renowned servant of God, an illustrious Bishop. God, who had raised up St. Norbert for the defense and honor of his Church, had endowed him with great spiritual and natural gifts. After his ordination as subdeacon St. Norbert was attached to the Court of Frederic, Bishop of Cologne, and later to that of Henry V. Emperor of Germany. At these Courts his pride and ambition somewhat impaired the spirit of his priestly vocation. But at length the grace of God touched him and, like another Saul, he was miraculously converted during a thunderstorm. This was in 1115. St. Norbert being then in his 35th year. The remaining 19 years of his life -for the Saint died in 1134 in his 54th year St. Norbert spent entirely in the service of his Divine Master. He preached with zeal the word of God, adding action to his sermons by the sanctity of his life and the miracles he wrought through God's grace. He converted sinners, re-formed the clergy, reconciled heretics and schismatics. During his missionary journeys he gathered a few disciples round him, and thus instituted his Order of Canons Regular at Prémontré in France in 1120. In 1126 he was elected Archbishop of Magdeburg, which see he adorned for the space of eight years. During the brief period of his last 19 years he was preeminently the Saint of his age. By his learning and holy life, he was the model of bishops and an oracle in their councils. He was the Chancellor and trusted adviser of the Emperor Lothair and presided at his councils. He stands forth as a diplomatist and statesman of the highest rank in preserving and promoting the true relations between Church and State, in resisting and suppressing the schism of Peter di Leone, in defending and proclaiming the rights of the Holy See. Though several attempts had been made on his life by the enemies of the Church, God allowed him to die in peace, and surrounded by his beloved children, on the Wednesday after Pentecost which fell that year, 1134, on the sixth of June.

To this summary a few further particulars may be added concerning St. Norbert and his Order. Whatever may be said of the etymology of the word Prémontré, visions and

wonderful events have indicated, that it was, indeed, a *locus præmonstratus*, a place foreshown, for the foundation of a new Order. At the conclusion of the Council of Rheims (October 1119) Norbert was requested by Pope Calixtus II to accompany bishop Bartholomew and to re- turn with him to Laon, where the Pope had decided to remain during the winter. The Saint's first biographer says that as soon as Calixtus arrived, they, (the Pope and the Bishops), deliberated how they could best retain the man of God in the diocese. Several places having been suggested, the bishop led Norbert into the forest of Coucy, where they found a deep marshy valley and near it a little chapel, fallen into ruins, dedicated to St. John the Baptist. In this chapel Norbert passed part of the day and the whole night in prayer. There the Queen of Angels appeared to him and told him, that his prayers were heard. She indicated the place where the first House of the Order should be built and she gave him the white habit of the Order, saying: Receive, my son, the white habit. St. Norbert founded his Order at Premontre, in January 1120. His first disciples were: Bl. Hugo of Fosse, chaplain to the bishop of Cambrai and St. Norbert's successor at Prémontré, St. Evermode who became bishop of Ratzeburg. Bl. Anthony of Nivelles afterward Provost of Ilbenstadt, seven students of the theological school of Laon, Bl. Walter, afterwards bishop of Laon, Bl. Milo, afterwards bishop of Therouane, and many others. Though all wished to lead an apostolic life, they had lived so far without any written rule, charity being the bond of their association and the example of Norbert their rule of life. St. Norbert never tired of recommending three maxims: cleanliness about the altar, confession of all their faults, and love for the poor, "For", he said, "a house wherein these three maxims are strictly observed will never be in want."

After much prayer and deliberation concerning a rule, St. Norbert had a vision: St. Augustine appeared to him and gave him his rule in these words: "I am Augustine, bishop of Hippo, behold a rule, which I have written; if your brethren my sons, shall have observed it well, they shall stand without fear in the presence of Christ on the terrible day of Judgment."

Guerenus writes in his Commentaries on the Canticles: St. Norbert, with his Order was raised up by Divine Providence to propagate devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. St. Norbert is usually represented in statues, paintings, and engravings as holding in his hand a monstrance to show his devotion to the Holy Eucharist. There is a picture (*in the original*), a reproduction of an old engraving, representing St. Norbert and St. Juliana of Cornillon holding the monstrance. This requires a word of explanation. Four years after the foundation of the Order, St. Norbert founded the Abbey of Mount Cornillon near Liège in Belgium. In the beginning of the order the Norbertine abbeys were double houses that is to say the abbey of priests was on one side of the church, the convent of nuns, who took care of the sick, was on the other. This was also the case at Cornilion. Here St. Juliana was favored with numerous revelations, which led to

the institution of the Feast of Corpus Christi. St. Norbert and St. Juliana are the patron Saints of Corpus Christi Church, Manchester.

ST. EVERMODE, touched by the sermons which St. Norbert had been preaching at Cambrai, asked leave to follow him and so he became the second disciple of the Founder of Prémontré. His youth, the purity of his life, and his zeal for the glory of God greatly endeared him to St. Norbert. Never was novice more fervent, never priest more zealous. He was St. Norbert's beloved disciple, his joy, his consolation, so much so that the Saint always wished to have Evermode at his side. He chose him as one of the twelve, who were to accompany him to Antwerp, to labor for the conversion of the Tanchelmites; to Cologne, to obtain relics for his new church; to Rome, for the confirmation of his Order; and when, in 1128, St. Norbert became Archbishop of Magdeburg, he once more ordered Evermode to come and remain with him constituting him Provost of the first Norbertine foundation in that city. Here he shared St. Norbert's toils, sufferings, and victories. And when St. Norbert was at last on his bed of suffering, St. Evermode was constantly near his beloved father, whose salutary exhortations he received with the most profound reverence, whose last counsels he stored in his own heart. After the death of St. Norbert, it was Evermode who buried the body of his beloved master and who became its faithful guardian, until he himself was made Bishop of Ratzeburg, near Bremen in 1154. The Diocese of Ratzeburg had been erected in 1062, Aristo being its first bishop. At the death of Aristo a persecution arose and the see was left vacant for more than 80 years. During this vacancy the country, never fully Christianized, relapsed into paganism. Here was a large field for Evermode's pastoral zeal. To work this his field with more success. the Bishop called several priests to his aid and he also established a Chapter of Norbertine Canons in his Cathedral. Their zealous efforts were crowned with success. Apostate catholics were brought back to the fold, and pagans received the light of faith. Evermode went from place to place instructing his people and organizing his diocese. He, therefore, is truly called the apostle of the various tribes of the Wends, a people of Slavic origin, who dwelt near the coast of the Baltic sea. He defended the liberties of the Church against the Duke, who claimed the right of Investiture. Full of days and good works he went to his eternal reward on February 17, 1177. His feast is kept on the day of his death, 17 of February.

The Chapter of Norbertine Canons, which St. Evermode had erected at Ratzeburg, had the right of electing the bishop of this diocese. Their choice, after the death of St. Evermode, fell on **ISFRIDE**, Provost of the Norbertine monastery of Jerichow in the Diocese of Havelberg. Isfride was a man of great learning, of solid piety, and of an austere life. The chronicle names him " *Sanctus Sancti successor* - a Saint succeeding a Saint."

Like his predecessor, Isfride went from place to place preaching the word of God and administering the Sacraments. Through his gentleness and charity he soon gained the hearts of the new converts and gradually succeeded in weaning them from their pagan customs and superstitions. He found a willing cooperator in Henry, Duke of Saxony, who had extended his dominions up to the Baltic Sea, and who saw that the best means of consolidating his new possessions was to christianize their inhabitants, the pagan Wends.

But great sufferings were in store for Isfride. Frederic Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany, had deprived Henry, Duke of Saxony, of his duchy, and had given it to Bernard, count of Anhalt. This prince persecuted all who did not approve of Frederic's policy against the Pope and the Church, or who showed any sympathy with Henry. These persecutions, which Isfride bore with dignity and patience, lasted until Henry was reconciled with the Emperor, and thereby re- covered his duchy. When in 1195 the chapter of Schwerin, composed of Saxon and Wend canons, did not agree as to the election of a bishop, Isfride was asked by the Pope to arbitrate between the two parties, and on his advice the Wend Brunward was made Bishop. In spite of the arduous labors of his apostolate among the Wends and the Saxons of his diocese, Isfride never relaxed his austerities. How pleasing these were to God is proved by a fact recorded in his life. When on Good Friday, Isfride, as usual, was fasting on bread and water, the water, though drawn from the ordinary source, was found to be changed into wine. God also granted him the gift of miracles. As the Bishop, his Chapter, and the faithful were going in procession round the church, a blind man approached the bishop, beseeching him to restore his sight. Isfride's tender heart was touched; he sprinkled the blind man with holy water, saying: "The Lord enlightens the blind." At these words the blind man recovered the use of his eyes. A saint before God and man, Isfride died the death of the just on the 15th day of June. On that day his feast is kept.

At the death of Bishop Peter in 1236, **LUDOLF** was elected his successor. The chronicles say that the strictest discipline had always been observed in this religious community and that Ludolf, a Norbertine Canon, had always been noted for his zeal and saintly life. After his election Ludolf did not change his manner of living; nay, knowing the spiritual needs of his diocese, he redoubled his vigils and prayers to draw down God's blessing on his labors. The Polabes, the Obitrites, and the Wends, tribes who inhabited chiefly the northern part of his diocese, had, through the exertions of his predecessors, been brought into the fold of the Church, but there always remained the fear, lest they might be led astray by the evil example and the corrupted morals of the neighboring tribesmen. Hence, burning with zeal for their salvation, Ludolf could not rest until he saw the laws of God and the Church observed throughout his diocese and all access to it from without closed against error and corruption.

He was unwearied in visiting the various parts of his diocese, in instructing and consoling his people, who looked on him as their beloved father and trusted protector, but the same could not be said of Albert, duke of Saxony, with whom Ludolf had a long conflict regarding the privileges and liberties of the Church. So far did the Duke pursue his evil designs, that he wished to raze to the ground the Cathedral and Monastery, both situated near his castle, and to transform the place into a garden. To these proposals Ludolf would not listen nor could he be moved by promises or threats to give up, what had been consecrated to God's service. The Duke then ordered some of his courtiers and soldiers to lay hands on the Bishop, to throw him into a noisome dungeon, and to detain him there until his consent had been extorted. It is impossible to describe the various sufferings the good Bishop had to endure at the hands of his jailors, but neither hunger, nor thirst, nor various tortures had any effect on Ludolf's constancy. When the Duke saw that the Bishop was sinking under his sufferings, he became afraid of the clamours of the people; therefore, he sent Ludolf to the Prince of Mecklenburg at Wismar, but so exhausted was the Bishop that he seemed to be at the point of death. At that moment St. Evermode and St. Isfride, his predecessors, appeared to him and comforted him. St. Ludolf died from the effects of his prolonged agony at Wismar on March 20, 1250. He is honored as a martyr for upholding the rights of the Church.

BL. **HROSNATA** (pronounce Rósnata) was born in the ancestral castle of Tepl, N-W Bohemia, about 1160. His father, Sezima, was a descendant of the Counts of Mielnic, and his mother, Dobroslava, belonged to the princely family of Czernin, from which St. Ludmilla and St. Wenceslaus were likewise descended. His truly Christian mother had consecrated him from his birth to the Blessed Mother of God, who, undoubtedly, took him under her maternal protection. For instance, at his coming into this world he was, to all appearance, a still-born child; and again he was, as it were, miraculously preserved from death, when the wheels of a carriage had passed over his tender limbs, and when he had fallen into a river. While young in years and heir to large estates, Hrosnata possessed all the virtues and the good qualities of the Christian knight. His charity towards the poor was boundless. His spotless life, the soundness of his judgment, his impartiality in rendering justice gained him the love and confidence of noble and vassal alike. He married a young lady belonging to one of the most distinguished families of Bohemia. After years of expectation they rejoiced in the birth of a son and heir, but alas! their joy was of short duration, for the child died and, soon after, the mother followed it to the grave. Bitter was the trial, but Hrosnata saw in it the finger of God. He built, near his Castle of Tepl, a monastery in honor of Our Lady and placed it in the charge of the Religious of the Norbertine Abbey of Strahov, near Prague. He then joined the Crusade against the Saracens in Palestine. On his return to Bohemia, he established a convent for Norbertine nuns in his Castle of Choteschau, where three of his sisters took the veil. Feeling that he himself was called to the religious life, he went to Rome

to consult the Pope, who gave him with his own hands St. Norbert's white habit and ordained him subdeacon. On his return from Rome, Hrosnata became a member of the Community of Tepl, which abbey he had founded. Here in the solitude of the cloister he gave himself entirely to the service of God; but he had much to suffer from noblemen, who had cast their greedy eyes on the Abbey lands. They waylaid him and carried him to one of their castles, where he was tortured to death. He received the crown of martyrdom on July 14, 1217. His *Cultus* was approved by Leo XIII in 1897. His Feast is on the 19th of July.

ST. ANDRIAN JANSENS, of Hilvarenbeek in Holland, and **St. JAMES LACOUPE**, of Audenarde in Belgium, are numbered amongst the 19 Martyrs of Gorcum. Though these champions of the Faith received the crown of martyrdom at Briel, they are usually called the martyrs of Gorcum, because in this town many of their number had been thrown into prison and had much suffer for their religion. to St. Adrian and St. James received the white habit in the Norbertine Abbey of Middelburg, in Dutch Zeeland. At the time of their martyrdom, Adrian was parish-priest and James his curate at Monster, near the mouth of the Maas, the Order of St. Norbert having the privilege of allowing some of its priests to have the charge of parishes. Adrian had always been an exemplary religious, but, unfortunately, James, soon after his ordination, had been carried away by the new religion and had given great scandal. However, through God's mercy, he had soon repented and, having done condign penance for his apostasy, he had striven to undo the evil he had caused by preaching and writing books in defense of the Catholic Religion. By these means he confirmed the just and brought many a stray sheep back to the Fold. The zeal with which Adrian and his young curate defended the Faith made them all the more odious to the Reformers, who at length succeeded in laying hands on them and in delivering them into the power of the Count of Lummen, the fanatical chief of the Reformers at Briel. Here they were thrown, together with other confessors of the Faith, into a dark and filthy dungeon, where they had to suffer hunger, and cold, and undescribable indignities. Having been brought before the Reformers 'council, they fearlessly confessed their religion, especially the doctrine of the Primacy of St. Peter and that of the Real Presence. As threats and promises were used in vain to induce them to apostatize, sentence of death was pronounced. The 19 martyrs were hanged and received the crown of martyrdom on July 9, 1572. They were beatified by Clement X and canonized by Pius IX in 1867.

ST. GILBERT, a rich nobleman of Auvergne in France, was one of the Crusaders, who, at the voice of St. Bernard, went forth with Louis VII, King of France, to fight the enemies of the Cross in Palestine. Before going to the East he confided his only daughter, Poncia, to his devoted wife, Petronilla, to whom he likewise made the request, that during his absence the poor should receive larger alms than usual. On his return from the Crusade, which had

been a complete failure, Gilbert, his wife, and daughter, formed the resolution to consecrate themselves and their property to the service of God and of God's poor. Having distributed part of his property to the poor, Gilbert built a hospital for the sick and also a convent for Norbertine Nuns at Aubeterre, where Petronilla and Poncia received the religious veil. As to himself, he wished to lead the life of a hermit and retired to a lonely place, called Neuffons (Nine Fountains), but, soon afterwards, he went to the Norbertine Abbey of Dilo (Dei Locus), where he put himself under the direction of Abbot Onifrius. Having made his profession, he was sent to found the Abbey of Neuffons. Of his Abbey he was made, much against his will and though not yet ordained priest, the superior, so manifest were his merits and holiness. Here he also built a hospital. Through humility and in a spirit of mortification, he dressed and kissed the wounds of the sick, and frequently, through God's grace, restored these sufferers to health and vigor. Mothers were seen to bring their delicate and deformed children to St. Gilbert, who blessed them, reading over them the Gospel: "Suffer little children come to me."

This is the reason why St. Gilbert is invoked, to this day, for the cure of sickly children. Such was his love for the poor that he expressed a wish to be buried in the cemetery of the poor. He died on June 6, 1152. His feast is celebrated on the 24th October, the day of the translation of his relics. Bl. Petronilla is commemorated on 13th July and Bl. Poncia on 16th May. Oh! thrice happy family! of which father, and mother, and daughter are numbered amongst the Saints of God!

ST. FREDERICK, born at Hallum in Friesland, began his education in his native town and completed his studies at Münster, in Germany, where there was at that time a flourishing school. Truly devoted from his infancy to the Mother of God, he put his chastity under her maternal protection. To St. John the Evangelist and to St. Cecily, his chosen patron saints, he daily recommended the purity of his body and soul. When at the end of his studies he was praying to know the state of life he should embrace, the Virgin Martyr, St. Cecily, appeared to him and told him, that it was God's will that he should work, not alone for his own sanctification, but also for that of others. Soon after he returned to Hallum, where he taught Latin and likewise instructed children in the catholic doctrine. Having reached the canonical age, he was ordained priest, and, without giving up teaching, assisted the aged parish-priest in the discharge of his pastoral duties. At the pastor's death, Frederic was chosen his successor and proved himself a devoted exemplary parish-priest, daily instructing his people, distributing almost all he had in alms to the poor, and spending much of his time in prayer. Each Saturday he was wont to say Mass in honor of Our Lady, through whose intercession he obtained many favors. On one occasion he saw in a vision the baneful influence of the world. Our Blessed Lady then appeared to him saying: "Flee out of Babylon." Feeling that he was called to a higher perfection, he went, with the consent of the Bishop of Utrecht, to the Norbertine Abbey of Mariënwaard, and after some time

returned to Hallum to found there a monastery, to which he gave, in honor of Mary, the name of Mariëngaard, or Mary's Garden. This occurred in 1168. To this monastery he added a school for the education of catholic youth. So great was the number of postulants that he was soon obliged to found other monasteries for priests and nuns. Having fallen ill and being near his end, he said his last Mass in honor of Mary, thanking his Divine Protectress for all the graces and favors received through her intercession. He died on March 3, 1175. His grave became glorious and famous: so numerous were the miracles wrought there. At the time of the Reformation, his holy body was removed to the Norbertine abbey of Bonne-Esperance, in Belgium. This abbey, confiscated during the French Revolution, is now the diocesan Seminary of Tournay. His feast is kept there on the 3rd of March.

ST. SIARDUS, founder and first Abbot of Mariëngaard, had added to his Abbey a school or College, where the youths of Friesland received their elementary and classical education. This school trained several learned and holy men, and two at least have received the honors of the altar, viz. St. SIARDUS and Bl. Herman Joseph. St. Siardus was born of noble parents in Friesland. Nature had endowed him with a penetrating mind, a tender heart, and other good qualities which were perfected by God's grace. Siardus was very young, when he came as a student to Mariëngaard. In course of time he joined the community, of which he became one of the most distinguished members. At the death of Abbot John in 1194. Siardus was chosen to succeed him, becoming, thus the fifth Abbot of Mariëngaard. His biographer makes this remark: "As the mantle of Elias had fallen on Eliseus, so the mantle of St. Frederic had fallen on Siardus," and the founder's double spirit of the active and the contemplative life had likewise rested on his successor. Siardus, now Abbot of a large community, understood the words of the wise man: "Have they made thee ruler? be not lifted up; be among them as one of them. » He was an example of humility, sharing with his brethren the humblest works of the community. "The just are gentle," says a certain writer. So was Siardus, for though severe in maintaining true discipline, never would he let an angry word pass his lips. In the engraving he is represented as having a basket full of loaves, to indicate his generous kindness towards the poor. God granted him the gift of miracles and of prophecy. Siardus died the death of the just on November 13, 1230. His body was first buried in the sacristy, but was afterwards translated to a marble tomb, which had been erected between the stalls in the choir of the church. His successor, Sibrandus, who wrote his life, attests that numerous miracles were wrought at this tomb and the same is recorded by his biographers of later times. At the time of the Reformation his relics were removed to a place of safety in Germany. There the relics were divided, one part being given to the abbey of St Foilian in Hainaut, the other to the abbey of Tongerlo near Antwerp. His feast is celebrated on the 17th of November.

ST. GODFREY (Godefridus, or God's peace), count of Cappenberg in Westphalia, was the chief of one of the most illustrious families of the German Empire, which traced its descent from Charlemagne and the Saxon Witikind. Jutta, his wife, was the daughter of the count of Arnsberg. Such was his rank in the eyes of the world, but he attained a far higher nobility through the pure and innocent life which he led from his infancy. His Life, edited by Bollandus, (13 January) says of him that he was: "The meekest and the gentlest of all the nobles, eloquent in discourse, prudent in counsel, brave in battle." The sins committed by his soldiers or subjects he attributed to himself so tender was his conscience. All this gave him a disgust of the world and impelled him to yearn to live for God alone. In 1120, the year of the foundation of Prémontré, St. Norbert happened to preach at Cologne, and as Godfrey had heard of Norbert, who, though count of Gennep and formerly chaplain to the Emperor, had left all to serve God alone, he went to hear and consult the future Saint. Deeply moved. Godfrey returned to Cappenberg, where he revealed his inmost thoughts to his wife and his younger brother Otto, with the result that the three resolved to transform their castle into a religious house. Soon after, Godfrey and Otto received the white habit from the hands of S. Norbert, while Jutta took the veil in a convent of Norbertine nuns. They also founded two other Abbeys, one at Ilbenstadt in Hesse and another at Varlar near Coesfeld. Such a change caused great consternation and Godfrey had much to suffer from the Westphalian princes, but especially from his father-in-law the count of Arnsberg. However, nothing could divert him from the resolution he had so generously formed. St. Norbert built great hopes on him and wished to have such a faithful and fervent religious near him. So Godfrey and his brother Otto went to Prémontré, where both received Minor Orders. This was in 1125. In the following year St. Norbert was chosen Archbishop of Magdeburg. and he requested Godfrey to accompany him to his see. Soon after Godfrey's health failed and he was allowed to return to the Abbey of Ilbenstadt, where his illness made rapid progress. When he was dying, he exclaimed: << Behold the Messengers of my God and Creator! Oh! how welcome they are! » With these words on his lips he rendered up his beautiful soul to his Creator on January 13, 1127, in his 30th. year. His feast is celebrated on the 16th of January.

ST. GERLAC was born, in the 12th century, of noble parents at Houthem (now called Houthem St.-Gerlac) a village five miles from Maastricht and 15 from Aix-la-Chapelle. He was an officer in the army of the German Emperor and had led a life of dissipation and sin, but the grace of God sought him, just when, at a tournament of nobles at Julich, he hoped to carry off again the prize for military skill and bravery. When all were assembled and the tournament was about to begin, a messenger brought him the news of the sudden death of his beloved wife. The suddenness of her death overwhelmed him with grief but it conveyed a salutary lesson: for it unveiled the vanities of this world. Without a moment's delay, he left his noble associates and returned to Houthem. Having put his affairs in order, he took

the pilgrim's staff, visited various shrines, repaired to Rome and threw himself at the feet of Pope Eugenius III, to whom he made his confession, asking also a severe penance in expiation of his sinful life. The Pope ordered him to go to Jerusalem and there to serve the sick and the poor in the hospitals for the space of seven years. After seven years of austere penance, combined with works of charity, Gerlac returned to Rome, where he gave an account of his life to Pope Adrian IV. By the Pope's advice he returned to Houthem to lead a hermit's life. Not far from the castle in which he was born, there stood a hollow oak tree of large dimensions in which he made his dwelling place, a little matting being his bed and a stone his pillow. Under the white habit of S. Norbert, which he had received, he carried various instruments of penance. Each day he visited the tomb of St. Servatius at Maastricht and each Saturday he made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady at Aix-la-chapelle. His usual prayer was: « Lord, have mercy on me a sinner. » He had much to suffer from ill-disposed people, who misunderstood his penances and pilgrimages. When he was near his death and no priest could be found, St. Servatius appeared to him and gave him the consolations of our Holy Religion. He died January 5, 1171. His feast is kept on the Monday within the Octave of the Ascension, the day of the translation of his relics.

BL. HERMAN JOSEPH was born at Cologne about 1150. He is called and, indeed, he ever was, a privileged child of Mary. Three of the numerous favors are depicted in the engraving. When Herman was but a little child, he was often observed to steal away to a church near his house, to kneel there before a statue of our Lady with the child Jesus in her arms, and to pray with as much fervor, as if he saw the Blessed Mother of God herself living, listening, and speaking to him. He often brought a flower, an apple, or some little present which had been given him to present it to the Divine Child in the Mother's arms. " At last, » so says the Legend, our Lady, in her great tenderness, bent down, one day, to her little visitor and held the divine child towards him: Then the Divine Word deigned to take the apple from the eager hands, and thus commenced the wonderful familiarity that Herman enjoyed all his life with the Mother and the Child. At the age of twelve years Herman offered himself to the community of Steinfeld. From thence he was sent to the abbey of Mariëngaard in Friesland to finish his classical studies under the supervision of St. Frederic the Abbot. Some years after he commenced his novitiate at Steinfeld. Here Herman's holiness was noted as angelic. Observing his tender devotion to Our Lady, some of the Religious gave him the name of Joseph. Herman's humility was pained by this title, as it made him feel his unworthiness the more, but Mary consoled him, for she appeared to him with the child Jesus resting in her arms, saying: "You shall carry my child as he was carried by my Spouse Joseph into Egypt, and because you have received the same privilege, you shall bear the same name. » This apparition is shown in the engraving, as well as that of the spiritual espousals of Herman Joseph to our Lady. Favors, spiritual and temporal, multiplied round his religious life, but he was also marked with the seal of the elect: grievous sufferings of

mind and body, which were especially severe on the great feasts of the Church. He offered up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with angelic devotion and wonderful graces were granted him during it. His love for souls was active to the end. In his goth year he conducted the services during Holy Week for the Cistercian nuns at Hoven. There, he was prostrated by fever and died on the Thursday after Easter in 1241, a model for all children of Mary and a perfect type of faith, purity, and love, to catholic youth. His feast is celebrated on the 7th of April.

BL. **BRONISLAVA** was born in 1203 at Kamien in Silesia, where her father Stanislaus, count of Prandota- Odrowaz, and her mother Anna, of the noble family of JaxaOkolski, resided at that time. St. Hyacinth and St. Ceslaus were her first cousins, both being sons of her father's brother Eustace. From her infancy Bronislava had given her heart to God. At the age of 16 she left the world, which she had scarcely known, to take the veil in the Norbertine convent of Zwierzyniec, near Cracow on the banks of the Vistula. This was in 1219, the year that her cousin St. Hyacinth, who is called the flower of the Dominican order, founded the priory of the Holy Trinity at Cracow. In the cloister Bronislava was ever a model to her sisters by her exact observance of monastic discipline. To the penances prescribed by the Rule she added others to mortify her senses and to obtain perfect mastery over herself. In her great humility she threw herself at the feet of her sisters, deeming herself unworthy of even being trampled on. Her detachment from the world was complete. The crucifix was her book of meditation. Frequently she retired to a lonely spot near the convent (now called Mount-St. Bronislava) the better to meditate on the Passion of Our Redeemer. There our Lord appeared to her saying: "Bronislava, my cross is thy cross, but my crown will also be thy crown. » On the feast of our Lady's Assumption Bronislava, while praying in the convent chapel, was consoled by another heavenly vision. She saw Heaven as it were opened and our Lady with hosts of Angels resting over the Dominican priory at Cracow, and thence returning to Heaven together with Hyacinth, who had just died. Henceforth Bronislava belonged more to Heaven than to earth. It pleased God to call his privileged spouse to the kingdom of eternal bliss on August 29, 1259, two years after the death of her cousin St. Hyacinth. The inhabitants of Cracow have always considered her as a Saint, so numerous were the miracles wrought through her intercession. Her Cultus, which has existed from time immemorial. was approved by Pope Gregory XVI in 1839. Her feast is on the 30th of August.

BL. **GERTRUDE**, the youngest daughter of Louis, Landgrave of Hesse and Thuringia, and of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, was born on the feast of St. Michael, September 29, 1227, eighteen days after the death of her father, who had joined the Crusade and who died in Apulia on his way to the Holy Land. Before her birth her parents made a vow to consecrate their child

to God- if a boy in the Norbertine Abbey of Rommersdorf, if a girl in the Norbertine Convent of Altenberg near Marburg these houses having often been visited by her parents. When Gertrude was eighteen months old her mother took her to Altenberg, in which convent she frequently remained for some time, living there as if she were one of the community. St. Elizabeth died on November 1231. After her death she appeared to her daughter Gertrude who was then four years old. It can easily be understood, that Gertrude, who had never known the world, must have made great progress in religious perfection; nor is it surprising that, at the death of the Abbess Christina, in 1248, Gertrude was elected to succeed her as Magistra or Abbess of Altenberg. Under her prudent and holy direction, the community continually advanced in the spiritual life as well as in material prosperity. She built the church and enlarged the convent buildings. In this church she exposed for veneration numerous relics of Saints which she had received from her mother. She also preserved her mother's nuptial ring, her bridal dress, a large crucifix and several statues of our Lady. These statues she placed in different parts of the church and the Convent, so that the nuns, wherever they were, might always have an image of our blessed Lady before their eyes. Singularly devoted to the Blessed Sacrament, she organized processions in and near the convent. In order to help the Crusaders, she had instituted, with the sanction of the Pope, a spiritual crusade of prayers and mortifications. She died August 13, 1297. at the age of 70 years all of which, with the exception of eighteen months, she had passed in the convent. Her feast is kept in the 13 August.