

Patronal Feast of St. Albert the Great

November 13, 2016



*O God, who made the Bishop St. Albert the Great,  
by his joining of human wisdom to divine faith,  
grant, we pray, that we may so adhere to the truths he taught,  
that is through progress in learning  
we may come to a deeper knowledge and love of you.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who live and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Collect for the Feast of St. Albert the Great

Within the Catholic Church each parish is placed under the patronage of one of the persons of the Triune God or one of the Saints of God. Our parish, established at Michigan Technological University, is placed under the protection of St. Albert the Great. According to church law, we are allowed to celebrate our patronal feast on a Sunday so that parishioners may join in the celebration. (On the Church calendar, the feast is November 15<sup>th</sup>.)

In March 1861 the Michigan Legislature passed Public Act 207, signed by the governor, to establish the Michigan Mining School at Houghton. It would have been the first mining college in the nation if the Civil War had not blocked appropriations. The Mining Engineering department was the first department established when the Michigan School of Mines opened in Houghton in 1885, dedicated exclusively to "mining and mining engineering." In over the many years of its history, hundreds of engineers have graduated from Michigan Tech.

The Catholic Community saw it necessary to ministers to the spiritual life of the Catholic Students. Established in 1963, St. Albert the Great Parish at Michigan Technological University in Houghton finds its origin in a Newman Club established in May of 1946 by Fr. Arnold Thompson for the students of the Michigan College of Mining and Technology. Fr. Thompson was the pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Franklin Mine at that time. Newman Clubs are named after Cardinal John Henry Newman of England (1801-1890), who believed in educating the whole person intellectually, physically and spiritually.

In December of 1946, Fr. George Laforest, pastor of St. Ignatius, was named Newman Chaplain. During the next five years he was assisted in Newman Club ministry by his assistant priests Frs. Joseph Kichak, David Harris, August Franczek and Patrick Frankard. In May of 1950 as Fr. Laforest was nearing the end of his pastorate at St. Ignatius, he announced the purchase of the former Myers home at 1301 Ruby Avenue (across from the present Jim's FoodMart). The "Newman House," as it was called, was to provide a place for college students to live in a Catholic Christian atmosphere. The house continued to grow and by 1954, the Newman House became the Newman Center. Fr. Thomas Drengacz, who began serving as pastor of St. Ignatius Parish in 1951, was assisted in Newman Center ministry by assistant priests Frs. Patrick Frankard, Louis Bracket, Glen Weber and William McGee. In June of 1958 Fr. McGee was appointed full-time Newman Center Chaplain. The first Mass at the Newman Center was celebrated on Sept. 28, 1958. The Newman Center was also home to the Aquinas

Club for Catholic married students.

As attendance at the Newman Center's daily Mass, meetings, lectures, socials, and discussions grew, so did the need for a larger complex. In June of 1959 a Newman Foundation was established to raise funds to purchase property and build a student chapel. Many Michigan Tech students, faculty, staff and local community members prayerfully worked in innovative ways with Fr. McGee and area clergy to raise money for the project. After they procured land on the south side of Michigan Tech's campus, now next to a set of apartments. Herman Gundlach, Inc., was awarded the base bid for \$214,770 for the new complex in April of 1963. The center would be named after St. Albert the Great (1206-1280), patron saint of natural scientists.

On May 5, 1963, groundbreaking ceremonies took place. The corner stone was laid on October 6<sup>th</sup>. The first Mass was offered by Msgr. Thomas Drengacz on Jan. 6, 1964. Bishop Thomas L. Noa dedicated the church on May 3, 1964. St. Albert the Great was established as a student parish with Fr. William McGee becoming the first pastor on Oct. 2, 1964.

As the student population grew at Michigan Tech University, so did the parish and its many ministries and opportunities for faith formation, spiritual growth and Christian service. The parish is one of the few student parishes in the United States with some dedicated "year 'round" parishioners.

Seeing to the faith life, under the leadership of Father Ben, with the generous support of a benefactor, we now have four FOCUS Missionaries extending our parish staff. (This is our third year to have such vibrant men and women reaching out to the students on our campus.) The FOCUS missionaries now have over 110 students in Bible study and around campus speaking of their belief in Jesus.

In January (2<sup>nd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>) there are two busloads of students going to SEEK, ([www.seek2017.org](http://www.seek2017.org)), from the UP, joining in a week of prayer and study in San Antonio Texas, with about 13,000 college students and priests and religious, sponsored by FOCUS.



The extension of our ministries requires additional funding so we have hired a development director, Rhen Hoehn, (he and his wife, Kylie, both graduates of MTU and active at St. Al's), in 2015. Rhen and Father Ben have spent time meeting donors and former students.

Furthermore, the *fruits of this ministry* are shown in the many solid Catholic marriages and families, numerous priests and religious (as the present Archbishop Alexander Sample of Portland, OR) as well as dedicated laity. We have truly entered the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by having Wi-Fi throughout the entire complex. We have a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/stagmtu>) that documents much of our recent activity and a webpage, ([mtucatholic.org](http://mtucatholic.org)) that contains much information about our parish. With the extended staff, we continue all kinds of gatherings and retreats, most recently at Bay Cliff Health Camp with other college students from across the UP, with another one planned for the weekend of March 24<sup>th</sup>. A new

enterprise will be an offering of a weekend silent directed retreat at Marygrove Diocesan Retreat Center at the end of February.

During the school year we have Friday Night Fireside Fellowship with a huge variety of speakers,



preceded by Mass and then a dinner prepared by students. The Spring Break Missionary Trips, as of the past few years, to Bay Cliff outside of Marquette and St. Martin dePorres House of Hope in Chicago, continue as our outreach, touching and enhancing many lives. These endeavors allow family and friends to share in these with donations and prayer. We witness to our Catholic faith with a Procession of the Cross through Houghton to the Church of the Resurrection in Hancock. Orientation Week, hikes, daily Adoration, Winter Carnival Events along with the Ice Chapel with Mass at the end of that week, Pastoral Council are activities that enhance our parish involvement. These are just a few of the student run activities that fill our spaces under the patronage of St. Albert the Great. We now go into the future to continue ministry to the MTU students. We pray and are grateful for all those who have served and now serve us.

#### **Pastors of St. Albert the Great University Parish**

Father William McGee (1963 – 1971)  
Father Donald Shiroda (1968 – 1971)  
Father Terry Villaire (1971 - 1972)  
Father George Wallner (1971 - 1972)  
Father Donald Zanon (1972 - 1974)  
Father Thomas Wantland (1974 - 1984)  
Father William Callari (1984 - 1997)  
Father Larry Van Damme (1997 – 2009)  
Father Allen Mott (2009 - 2013)  
Father Ben Hasse (2013 – present)

#### **Pastoral Associate Ministers of St. Albert the Great**

Sister Michael White, CSJ (1979 - 1981)  
Sister Ghislaine Dumont, O.P. (1981)  
Sister Theresa Semmerling, SCSC (1983 - 87)  
Mrs. Rita Loughrin-Sacco (1987 - 1990)  
Mrs. Agnes Ahola (1990 - 1993)  
Deacon Paul Lucchesi (1993 - 1997)  
Mr. Colin Jenkins (2002 – 2004)

Sister Ellen Enright, IBVM (2004 -present) Our patron, St. Albert the Great, was born sometime



before 1200, and with given well-attested evidence he was aged over 80 on his death in 1280. Albert was probably born in Lauingen (now in Bavaria), since he called himself 'Albert of Lauingen', but this might simply be a family name. Most probably his family was of *ministerial* class; his familiar connection with (being son of the count) Bollstädt noble family. Albert was educated principally at the University of Padua, where he received instruction in Aristotle's writings. A late account by Rudolph de Novamagia refers to Albert's encounter with the Blessed Virgin Mary, who convinced him to enter Holy Orders. Around the 1220s he became a member of the Dominican Order, and studied theology at Bologna and elsewhere.

Selected to fill the position of lecturer at Cologne, Germany, where the Dominicans had a house, he taught for several years there, as well as in Regensburg, Freiburg, Strasbourg, and Hildesheim. During his first tenure as lecturer at Cologne, Albert wrote his *Summa de bono* after discussion with Philip the Chancellor concerning the transcendental properties of being. In 1245, Albert became master of theology under Gueric of Saint-Quentin, the first German Dominican to achieve this distinction. Following this turn of events, Albert was able to teach theology at the University of Paris as a full-time professor, holding the seat of the Chair of Theology at the College of St. James. During this time Thomas Aquinas began to study under Albert. Albert was the master of the natural sciences as well as theology which makes him a great patron for us.

*God of all goodness, we turn toward you with loving hearts  
and in utmost confidence  
and thank you for the blessings of family and friends.  
Please be with our students this year.  
Surround them with good friends, and provide them with excellent teachers  
and with the wise counsel of trustworthy guides.  
Give them the discipline and the understanding necessary to succeed  
in their studies and the determination to remain focused on their education  
and committed to their goals.  
Protect them while they are away from home.  
Continue to strengthen and inspire them to believe in themselves,  
to find goodness in others, to grow in faith, and to count on your loving support.  
Help them to learn to delight in each new day, in each new relationship,  
and in the natural beauty that surrounds them.  
Help them to be kind to their friends and to be generous to those in need,  
to enjoy learning and to live joyfully, to respond to each challenge with courage, creativity and  
confidence, to act responsibly and justly  
as they grow in age and wisdom.  
We thank you for setting them at tasks that will demand their best efforts  
and for leading them to accomplishments that will satisfy and delight them;  
and we thank you for this university and parish  
that partners with us in helping form and educate them  
toward a life of ethical leadership and service.  
And so we entrust them to your merciful and providential care.  
Please, God, be with our students this year.*

– adapted from a prayer by Brother William Mann (St. Mary University Parish, MN)