

# Frequently Asked Questions About Canonry of St. Leopold sheet#2

## [The Place of the Canonry of St. Leopold in the Catholic Church]

### Who lives at the Canonry of Saint Leopold?

The Canonry of Saint Leopold is the home to the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine. It resides in the building that was used as the rectory for Saint Patrick's. Father Daniel, the prior, Father Bruno and Father Elias are the first Canons to live in this residence. They are, therefore, the founders of the first house of Klosterneuburg in America.

### What is a foundation?

In the history of religious life, one sign of the health and vitality of a charism (a grace given to individuals to build up the Church) is growth. Klosterneuburg founded a community of Canons in Bergen, Norway in 2003, and in 2011 founded a community in Glen Cove, New York. These foundations are both dependencies of the abbey, children as it were. However, if they grow in numbers and establish a stable and viable community life with adequate financial resources, they may, someday, become independent communities.

### Is someone in charge of the Canonry?

Yes. The Provost of Klosterneuburg appointed Father Daniel to be the local superior of the Canonry of Saint Leopold. His task is to govern the community internally and to represent it externally in all its dealings with outside bodies, such as the Diocese of Rockville Center. The local superior bears the title "Prior", whose superior is the Provost of Klosterneuburg.

### What is a Stift?

"Stift" is a German word that means "endowment" or "foundation". As a result, some abbeys are called Stifts. We often refer to Klosterneuburg, even in English, as a Stift because both "abbey" and "monastery" are terms that have connotations of monastic life which are not entirely in keeping with our Canonical Vocation.

### What is Klosterneuburg?

It depends who you ask. Some hear, "Lobster Newburg", which sadly I have never seen in Austria; others, "close to no where", which is not entirely true since it is right next to Vienna on the Danube River. Actually, Kloster Neuburg is an old settlement with roots in the Celtic and Roman periods. The name is a fusion of two words, "Kloster" related to the English, "cloister" refers to the abbey, and "neuburg", the "new fortress", refers to the fortified residence of St. Leopold and the Babenberg family. Presumably, the "old fortress" refers to the Roman encampment, begun around 50 AD. Remember, the Danube River was the boundary between civilization and barbarism, at least as the Romans saw it, but don't tell the Hungarians!

### What is a Provost?

The Provost is the superior of the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine at Stift Klosterneuburg. His title, "Provost," in English is a rendering of the Latin term, "*praepositus*", literally meaning "the one put forward". In its Augustinian usage, it refers to the fact that the Chapter elects, literally puts

forward a canon for a term of service. He is the prime minister, as it were, of the Chapter, which is the highest legislative body of the abbey. The Provost governs the community; but, the Chapter elects him and must consent to major decisions regarding the life of the community: the annual budget, permission for temporary and perpetual vows, etc.

### **Who is in the Chapter?**

The Chapter is the highest governing body in the abbey. It is an ancient form of democracy that has long been an integral part of Canonical Life. All the men who have made solemn profession are automatically also admitted to the Chapter; they are called Capitulars. This is a broad enfranchisement since it includes those Canons who are priests as well as those on the way to priestly ordination, and even, in rare cases, those who may never be ordained, as long as they have made a life-time commitment to the community in the form of religious vows.

### **How does one become a Capitular?**

A man of sound morals and health is clothed as a novice, i.e., receives the Habit for a period of one year. After the novitiate, he (by asking) and the Chapter (by voting) decide whether he should deepen his bond to the community through the profession of temporary vows (three years). At the end of these four years, the junior (the name of those who are in temporary vows) petitions the Provost and the Chapter for admission to the Chapter through the profession of perpetual or solemn vows. The vote takes place in the semi-annual Chapter Meeting in May. After a discussion of the candidate's progress, the Provost hands each Capitular two small balls, one white and one black. The Capitular then goes behind a screen, and if he wishes to vote to admit the candidate, he places the black ball in the black basket and the white ball in the white basket. A black ball in the white basket is a negative vote. After all the votes have been cast, the Provost and two or three other members of the Chapter count the votes. If the man has a simple majority, he is admitted; if not, then he is "blackballed", namely, not admitted to the Chapter; this is the origin of that phrase.

### **Why is the Canonry dedicated to Saint Leopold?**

Saint Leopold is the benefactor who founded Stift Klosterneuburg in 1114, first as a community of secular Canons; then a little later, with the urging of St. Altmann of Passau, a courageous bishop and his childhood teacher, and Leopold's son, Blessed Otto of Freising, a Cistercian Monk and later Bishop, St. Leopold introduced the Augustinian Canons (or Canons Regular of Saint Augustine) in 1133, where we have been ever since. But more about him later.

### **How is the Canonry of Saint Leopold supported?**

The Canons work! Both parishes pay a salary, as they would for Diocesan priests, but not to the Canons individually, but rather to the Canonry. As religious, the Canons hold all things in common. While there was a one-time grant of start-up funds from Klosterneuburg, the future growth of the Canonry will depend entirely on the money earned by the Canons and by charitable donations from the faithful. The Canonry of St Leopold is a not-for-profit corporation under New York State law; all donations are tax-deductible. Donations can be made to either: "The Canonry of Saint Leopold, Inc." or "Canons Regular of Saint Augustine (USA), Inc."