



SAINT AUGUSTINE'S HOUSE

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NEWSLETTER

Lent A.D. 2021

The Congregation of the Servants of Christ, St. Augustine's House, is an ecumenical Christian community whose life of discipleship is inspired and shaped by the Holy Rule of St. Benedict. We identify with the Lutheran tradition, understood as a movement within and for the one holy catholic and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ.

We are committed to the growth of the permanent resident community, to the pursuit of ecumenical understanding, and to the provision of retreats for members of the Fellowship of St. Augustine and others. We seek to serve the whole Church by our life of prayer and by the use of our facilities.

✠ PAX

The most famous story in Greek mythology, the epic of Homer, relates the Trojan War and the long-delayed return of Odysseus from Troy. As he meanders and inches his way home his wife Penelope maintains the household and her hope for his return. After most have given up hope suitors from near and far come seeking her hand in place of the missing husband. When they ask her to choose among them Penelope devises an ingenious delaying tactic. She must, she says, weave a burial shroud for her aged father-in-law, Laertes, before choosing. She works at the loom on the shroud every day, seeming to make progress. But every night she is back at the loom tearing out what she had woven during the day. Thus she never finishes the burial shroud, a ruse she plays out for three years waiting for the return of her husband. In fact, she outwits the suitors and is counted a genuine heroine in the epic.

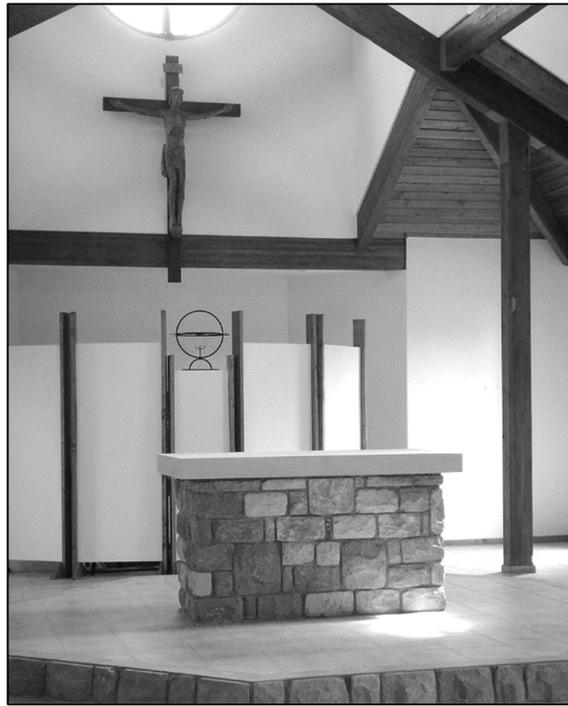
While Penelope is admired for the clever handling of what could have been an ugly situation, a pondering over the story yields several more possibilities. The wonderful work of creation by day is undone by a destructive night. In the years in which I taught prisoners, most of whom were addicted, I used the story also as a parable of addiction. What you projected as your identity by day was undone by your activity by night. You had high hopes and base desires, two things set against each other. But in this instance the base overcomes and brings you down. It is quite amazing to realize how many people deal with dueling realities in their lives, sometimes benignly begun, but then grown to devouring proportions. The role of choice is key to understanding the dilemma. Penelope's choice is for good, for her marriage and her husband, for delaying the day of reckoning. Most such choices involve taking the risk, denying one's own vulnerability ("It won't happen to me"). Sometimes it is the conscious reaching for some forbidden fruit, just to taste. A parallel story in literature is Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, in which a physician creates a potion that transforms him into a creature of the night and untrammelled base desires and their fulfillment. The story is well known in our culture, but badly handled in film and lore. One needs to read the original story by Stevenson to perceive the insight into the interior warfare and the triumph of evil in the doctor's life. The story is far more sophisticated than that depicted in grade D movies.



A close parallel is found in the writing of St. Paul in Romans 7 where in the midst of discussing law and gospel he describes his own dividedness. "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. So then it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." It was like a moment of truth in a conversation with a prisoner when I said, "You have to keep both feet inside the law," and he replied, "Yeah, but you gotta know there'll be a war going on inside me." There is more in Romans 7. Read it and study it.

As is so often the case the pattern discernible in persons is also found in groups and tribes and nations. Whether by deliberate choice or by unconscious choice or by accident a person or a group can set off an internal war with disastrous consequences. Just as a person can commit suicide without ever admitting that proclivity (many of our habits are slow suicide), so a larger group can tear at the fabric of society while masking the activity with a constructive vocabulary. The compelling example in our own history is the division over the issue of slavery. The immoral enslavement of human beings became normative and an economic necessity in one section of the country and the contradictory systems moved inexorably toward open warfare, both using the vocabulary of freedom and nationhood. There are hundreds, no, thousands of examples in history. And there are examples in abundance closer at hand and closer in history.

Lent is an invitation to look inside. The normal chatter about Lent has to do with fasting and repentance in preparation for Easter and resurrection. The problem is we tend to gloss over the gravity of our own sins and head for Easter in great leaps. If confronted with something serious we tend to look the other way or point in other directions. We rush from prayer to sermon to coffee so as not to be caught seriously engaged. Lent is deliberately laid into our lives to invite us to be serious about the sin in our lives, no



matter how grave, no matter how controlling. The temptation to trivialize sin tears out what God has woven in the day. Lent is deliberately laid into our lives to invite serious contemplation of God's intervention in Christ when we can't overcome, when we can't see the way forward. Then we contemplate the cross. Then we count the cost. Then we acknowledge the points of resistance and yield to the river of grace flowing from his dying form.

Don't let it come and go without notice. Take time. Tell the truth. Let God tell you the truth about yourself. Stand in and under the gospel of Jesus week by week. Daily engage the word of God by reading and silence, listening and listening. Let Christ overcome every resistance within you.

"Lord Jesus, think on me / And purge away my sin; / From selfish passions set me free / And make me pure within" (Synesius of Cyrene, 375-430).

Blessed Lent!

Fr. John Cochran, Prior

Schedule for Lent & Holy Week

Palm Sunday , March 28th	10:00 a.m.
<i>Palm Procession, St. Matthew's Passion Narrative</i>	
Maundy Thursday , April 1st	6:00 p.m.
<i>Mass of the Lord's Supper, Washing of Feet</i>	
Good Friday , April 2nd	4:30 p.m.
<i>Solemn Liturgy; St. John's Passion Narrative</i>	
Holy Saturday , April 3rd	9:00 p.m.
<i>Vigil and First Mass of Easter</i>	
Easter Sunday , April 4th	10:00 a.m.
<i>Mass of Easter Day</i>	

News & Notes

❖ The Indiana Chapter of the Society of the Holy Trinity met again at St. Augustine's House February 8 to 10, somewhat reduced in numbers, but not in spirit.

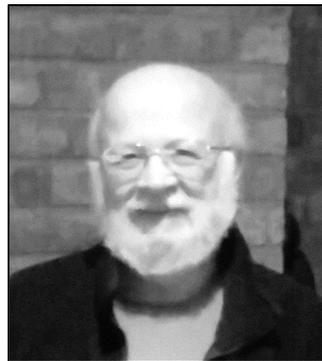
❖ The trickle of retreatants through the deep winter months of December, January and February continued in spite of the pandemic, enhanced this year by several long-term guests: **Fabienne Norman**, born in Switzerland, married to an American and living in Fairhope, Alabama, came for a visit from December 14 to January 5. We never had a retreatant so delighted with snowfall and its accompanying realities.



We think we'll be a winter target from now on. **Jason Kwon**, born in South Korea, a ten year resident of Los Angeles, arrived on December 8 for an indeterminate stay (3 to 6 months) with his North Korean pet dog, Micky, in tow. Jason is a skilled auto mechanic (GM and KIA



trained) and will relocate from the West Coast to the central states. **Sam Ewalt** first visited Saint Augustine's House in 1966 with the youth group from Grace Church in Pontiac, Michigan. For many years he has organized and led mindfulness meditation retreats and meetings in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh. He has travelled widely in India, visiting ashrams and pilgrimage sites, lived for a year at the Zen Buddhist Temple in Ann Arbor, and is now happy to be exploring his Lutheran spiritual roots. He plans to stay at least a year, perhaps longer, and deeply appreciates the welcoming hospitality.



❖ The dedicatory recital for the Wigton organ now gracing the west end of our church was held on Sunday afternoon, the 28th of February. Scott M. Hyslop, currently music director at St. Lorenz Lutheran Church, Frankenmuth, played a program of varied musical styles

which showcased the versatility of the organ. The original organ was built by Berghaus Organ Company in 1975. In 2019 it was rebuilt and significantly augmented by Wigton Pipe Organs. The organ fits well both acoustically and visually in its setting. Many thanks to all who have contributed financially toward the organ and special thanks to George Weckman whose support and generous gift made it possible to begin the project. With this recital the building phase has come to its official conclusion; this instrument is now a beautiful part of our mission to serve the whole Church by our life of prayer and the use of our facilities.

www.StAugustinesHouse.org

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Gifts are gratefully acknowledged in memory of

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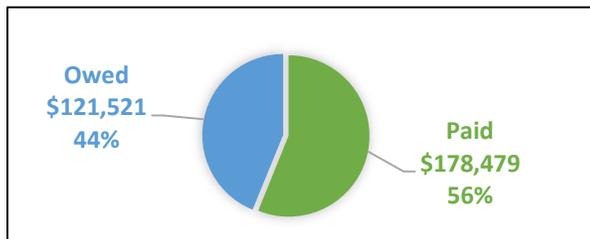
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Mortgage Partners

The monthly mortgage payment is \$3,074. You may participate for any amount from \$100 and up. We gratefully acknowledge the following donors for this past quarter:

\$3,074 by Donna Ritchie; \$600 by Steven Y. Chang; \$500 by Frederick Keller, Philip H. Pfatteicher, and Robert S.

Richards; \$300 by Arthur R. Olsen, and Philip J. Secker; \$200 by Samuel F. Ewalt, Ken & Denise Grant, Jonathan Linman, Wolf D. Knappe, Manfred Stibbe, and David Westphal; \$150 by Daniel V. McCallum, and Richard G. Miller; \$125 by Frank Gambino; \$120 by Thomas Struck; \$100 by Barbara Watts Asmus, Jane Bingham, Thomas B. Chittick, Elizabeth Chowdry, William C. Cooper, Jack & Sally Crist, Valerie Daley, Richard D. Dick, Keith Forni, Michael Aiden Goddard, Artis Hall, Bruce M. Hartung, Ken & Olga Hiltunen, Larry L. Johnson, Jane R. Lemmon, John & Ruth Lueders, C. Peter Maisenbach, Norman E. Nething, Nurya Parish, John E. Peterson, Don & Dorothy Pitzen, Patrick J. Rooney, Kenneth C. Steketee, Walter & Dyann Taylor, Steven P. Tibbetts, James & Gertrude Tooman, Richard W. Vevia, William H. Volz, Andreas & Julia Wagner, Robert Walters, and Robert Louis Wilkin.



A Remembrance:

Fr. Jude (Donald) Motaka 1952-2020

He was an unlikely monk. When he announced that he had moved to the monastery at Oxford, Michigan, his friends wrinkled their brows and asked, “Don Motaka?” “In a monastery?” You may be sure that he asked himself the question too before he came. Donald E. Motaka was the only child of Almena Motaka, in the borough of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and a very bright one at that. His mother worked at the Lamppost Tea Room across the street from Gettysburg College, which was directly across the street from the building serving as the office of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. He would attend the Lamppost with his mother when not in school, thus mingling with secret service men, politicians and reporters at an early age. He was an active member of Saint James Lutheran Church in Gettysburg and a volunteer in the choir. Smart as a whip and quick of tongue he was a fistful in the growing up. His pastors (Fritz Foltz and Ed Keyser) saw to it that he received a superior education (University of Pennsylvania and Yale Divinity School) as he prepared for ministry in the Lutheran Church. Ordained and called

he served two parishes, the first in rural Pennsylvania, Aaronsburg, the second in the city of Philadelphia, Tabernacle Lutheran Church.

But then he was off to Washington where he was engaged as an administrative assistant to a congressman from Massachusetts. His education, his sharp tongue and his quick wit served him well in that capacity. When that congressman retired Motaka shifted his focus to county government in nearby Maryland, specializing in the emerging technology of the internet. The economic downturn of 2008 devastated his work near Washington. Then came the period familiar to many as they approach senior status, the difficulty of finding an appropriate job after years of productive employment.

In 2013 he came exploring monastic life and liked what he found. He pursued a calling and became a professed monk at Saint Augustine’s House. There were rough edges and disconnects at points, but he worked and worked at it. He revived an earlier interest in fine woodworking, converting the garage into a first class woodshop. Many of the exquisite pieces of furniture at Saint Augustine’s House are “Fr. Jude Creations.” His keen intelligence, sharp tongue and quick wit linger after his presence. He took the name of Jude, known as the saint of lost causes, but as you can see it is only lost to those who cannot see.

He will be much missed, mostly for his faithfulness in prayer and his deep, abiding faith in Jesus Christ. Rest eternal grant him, Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him.

