



# SAINT AUGUSTINE'S HOUSE

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## NEWSLETTER

**Lent, A.D. 2022**

✠ PAX

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.

When I arrived at St. Augustine's House in 1981, we already were using the new translation of the Lord's Prayer proposed by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL). At that time, it seemed reasonable to assume that it would become the standard English version. This has proved not to be the case. Although most of the updated language of the Liturgy done in the 1970s has received wide acceptance, the proposed revision of the Lord's Prayer has lagged. Almost a half century after its introduction it is still in distant second place to the traditional version in terms of popular usage. For some time now I have been mulling over the idea of returning to the traditional language for the Lord's Prayer here at St. Augustine's and had earlier suggested this to our Pastoral Council. At the January meeting we decided for the seasons of Lent and Easter we would use the older version and then decide whether to make this reversion permanent.

The resilience of the traditional version is shown in several ways. Already at the beginning it seems to have been recognized that the replacement of this prayer would not be an easy sell with "the man in the pew." The hymnals and prayer books of Lutherans and other liturgical protestants printed the new version in a column parallel with the old. In this sense the new version was always experimental and optional. It soon also became evident that it was not generally known from memory. In a group one could not begin the words "Our Father..." and have everyone spontaneously join in. The new version had to be read rather than recited "by heart." Although I have sung the new version in the Liturgy for decades, when I recite it silently, I always revert to the older version. It is also significant that, when the Roman Catholic Church translated the liturgy into English, the older form was retained as a prayer already known in English by the laity. When the language of the Mass was revised more recently this pastoral decision was not revisited.

Along the same lines, at the January meeting of the council we decided to restore the more literal "and with your spirit" as the liturgical response to the salutation "The Lord be with you" and for similar greetings. It is true that on an everyday level the response means "and also with you" or "the same to you," or perhaps even, "right back at you;" but "and with your spirit" is the idiomatic biblical way of saying this and that is not unimportant. This form of greeting is witnessed to in the New Testament Scriptures and has enjoyed continuous use in the Christian liturgy. St. Paul



concludes several of his letters with the wish that Christ or the grace of Christ be “with the spirit” of his addressee. It reminds us of another dimension of our human existence and our relationship to each other and to God. St. Paul writes “When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Rom 8:15f). Christians greet one another not merely face to face, but spirit to spirit and in the Holy Spirit.

The sacred wirings of most cultures seem usually to be in an idiom that is distinct from ordinary street language. Often this is an antiquated form of the language and in some cases an entirely different language. In the transmittal of the Bible and the Liturgy in Christian history there is a tendency to preserve the language in which the Gospel was first delivered or in which it was first translated into a local language. The Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint, enjoys an almost canonical status since it was the translation that the New Testament writers were familiar with and quoted in various places. The Latin translation of the Bible by St. Jerome, the Vulgate, became the standard in the West. Luther’s German translation was, of course, revered by Lutherans and influenced the development of the modern German language. The King James version of the Bible was the standard for English speaking Protestants and heavily influenced the English language and literature.

In general, I think our definition of contemporary language is often too narrowly conceived. We commonly speak in many different idioms and with varying levels of formality depending on the context. It is true that we do not normally speak using the archaic pronouns and verbs, yet, for example, it seems quite natural when reciting the Lord’s Prayer or the 23rd Psalm. In fact, in the past the distinct language of the King James Version of the Bible had the advantage of alerting hearers and readers to the fact that Holy Scripture was being quoted. This style of language was often described as memorable, and that may be literally true; it is as if the brain has a specialized filing system for distinct forms and patterns of speech. *Liturgiam Authenticam*, a Roman

Catholic guide for translation, observes: “If indeed, in the liturgical texts, words or expressions are sometimes employed which differ somewhat from usual and everyday speech, it is often enough by virtue of this very fact that the texts become truly memorable and capable of expressing heavenly realities” (27).

The Christian Scriptures and prayers that are introduced into a culture are not merely passive additions but are seeds and catalysts for the transformation of daily life, customs, and speech. *Liturgiam Authenticam* again: “While the translation must transmit the perennial treasury of orations by means of language understanda-

ble in the cultural context for which it is intended, it should also be guided by the conviction that liturgical prayer not only is formed by the genius of a culture, but itself contributes to the development of that culture” (47).

Sacred Scripture and the prayers and hymns of the Liturgy are not read merely for information, the way we might read a daily newspaper and then dispose of it. They are static, changeless texts that are meant to be read and prayed again and again, like the Lord’s Prayer. Their freshness does not arise from their new content but from the renewing and deepening of the relationship

we have with them. The more familiar, the more conversant we are with them the more they mean to us. In his little book *On the Inspiration of Scripture*, the Lutheran theologian Robert Jenson reflects on the different ways the Holy Spirit is active in the Scriptures and concludes: “the Spirit inspires Scripture in that he presents it to believers simply for reading and reflection... The mere exposure to Scripture—exemplified perhaps by the way a Benedictine community chants its way through the Psalter—directs the soul.”

Here at St. Augustine’s, we chant and pray our way through the Psalms weekly. When I come upon a particular Psalm in the weekly cycle, I do not think to myself, “Oh, I already read this one.” Rather it is like encountering an old friend; my recognition and familiarity brings joy and the desire for reacquaintance. I also like the idea that the Psalms have a deep history; they are the songs of Zion that accompany the



Church on her pilgrimage on earth. They have been prayed by King David, by the prophets, by worshippers standing in the Jerusalem Temple, by our Lord and the Apostles, by St. Augustine, St. Benedict, and countless other saints, and by my more immediate forebearers. They evoke my personal history as well. Much as some people might associate certain popular songs with events in their life, certain Psalms are associated with people, emotions, and prayers from my life.

The inspired Scriptures of the past are the *inspiring* Scriptures for the present, providing us with companionship and courage as we journey forward.

In the boundless love of Christ,  
Br. Richard

## News & Notes

In January we were happy to welcome David Mathews as a Long Term Guest. He is 21 years old and will begin medical school this fall. He is spending some time here to renew his relationship with God and to clarify his career path.



The Indiana Chapter of the Society of the Holy Trinity held their retreat here February 7-9. The Senior of the Society, Pr. Patrick Rooney attended and gave several talks on the role and place of religious orders within non-Catholic faith traditions.

When Fr. Jude arrived here about a decade ago, he brought with him his interest in and talent for woodworking. Since his death over a year ago the equipment in his woodshop has not seen much use. This winter we have been downsizing while keeping some basic tools on hand for our occasional use.

The disposition of the woodshop has occasioned the creation of an informal property committee to oversee maintenance and grounds upkeep. It is hoped that this will facilitate the ongoing maintenance of our complex of buildings, improve and beautify our grounds, and provide oversight as we move forward with new projects.



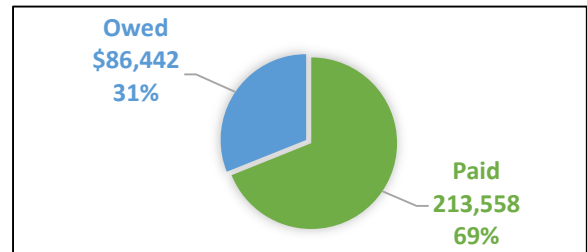
The end of February Br. Andy Chang took leave for a prolonged visit with his parents in Korea. As the oldest son in the family, he will assist them in decisions concerning retirement and living arrangements either in Korea or in the United States. In fulfilling this obligation, he has the blessing and prayers of our community. He anticipates his return here early next year.

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

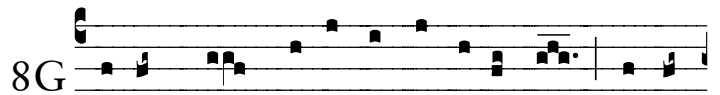
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## Mortgage Partners

The monthly mortgage payment is \$3,074. You may participate for any amount from \$100 and up. We gratefully acknowledge the following donors: for **December**, Pr. Jim Seeley in memory of his wife Diane; for **January** in memory of Fr. John Cochran, Dr. and Mrs. D. V. McCallum, John E. Peterson, and Pr. and Mrs. Mark Knappe; and for **February**, James Tooman, Steven Bowser, Sandra Towerman, and Jane M. Bingham.



## A Lenten Antiphon



Behold, now \* is the acceptable time; behold,



now is the day of sal- vation.



## Dialogue at the Cross

*In his book on the Lord's Prayer, We Dare to Say Our Father, Louis Evely quotes this dialogue from Fr. Victor Poucel.*

—Yes, Lord, I know, your eyes saw me. But what am I in the crowd of this world? And have you looked at so many besides me.

*Jesus.* —I saw you alone.

—Then, no doubt, you saw me with a distant look, like a vision that vanishes amongst thousands of others. Tell me the moment when you had that thought for me.

*Jesus.* —I have always had it.

—Lord, tell me this too, during those hours, from what have you suffered most?

*Jesus.* —From you.

—Alas, Jesus. You bore the sins of all, their weight was increasing but, tell me with what thorn did I pierce your forehead?

*Jesus.* —With all of them.

—What, Lord, and it is I too who scourged you, and I too who nailed you, and I who killed you. Then, Lord, what did the others do?

*Jesus.* —You are my Passion.

—Then, my Saviour, your soul was distressed and afraid. Tell me, what did you fear most?

*Jesus.* —To lose you.

—Yes, Lord, I know that the lost should make your Passion useless. But tell me, are there many who get lost. Is it true that their number is greater than that of the elect?

*Jesus.* —If I lose you I lose all.

—But again Lord, what did you want, what did you desire most at that moment?

*Jesus.* —To save you.

—You were dying for all men and you thirsted to save them all. When you wanted all men so ardently, could one alone quench your thirst?

*Jesus.* —I thirst for you.

—Lord, how mysterious this is. How is it that I alone, if I am lost, make your Passion useless? And if I am saved, I take from you all regret for having suffered? And what share will the others bring to your victory?

*Jesus.* —Be my victory.

Gifts are gratefully acknowledged in memory of

MARY LOU VLASOV BAKER  
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And in honor of

RICHARD G. HERBEL  
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GEORGE WECKMAN

