

THE AUGMENTER

Webster's Definition:
augment (verb)—to
make or become greater
augmenter (noun)

Newsletter for Families of St. Augustine Religious Education in Larchmont, NY

Our entire task in this life consists in healing the eyes of the heart so that they may be able to see God. — St. Augustine

Miracle of Mercy or Femur Fiasco

When Pope Francis proclaimed this year as the Year of Mercy on December 8, 2015 until November 20, 2016 I did not envision I would be involved by remembering my high school physiology class with the picture of my femur coming into full view! Please Lord, have mercy on me!! On December 19 I was literally swept off my feet with a thud on my back side viewing a spectacular sight of my left leg alternating back and forth in a riveting rush with a life all its own. The ride to the White Plains hospital had me in a stir convincing the EMT that is where I wanted to go. The x-ray brought Dr. Ben Bedford, my orthopedic surgeon, to my side explaining that the femur, indeed had fallen prey to, not one, but two breaks. He was ready to insert a rod and screws to correct the damage and heal me of my plight.

With time spent in the hospital, United Hebrew Rehab, our motherhouse personal care facility at Maria Hall, in Danville, PA and then back to St. Teresa's Convent with out-patient therapy at Active Physical Therapy in Larchmont. I am making progress, learning to walk again, thanks to the RNs,

CNAs, physical therapists and staff at all these facilities where I found **mercy**. I am writing this article on the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul who was blinded by a great light. God sought to teach me some hard lessons, too. Learning to ask for help, to give my independence a vacation, and to start the rigor of pain and patience in strengthening my hip and leg for balance and motion were all acts of mercy that God sees are good for me.

I know I will be writing thank you notes for the rest of my life to so many, for all the prayers, kindnesses, acts of mercy and the outpouring of gifts, cards, good wishes and love shown me. I am making my way back to the children and young people I so love, the catechists, volunteers and families, I have the privilege of calling "my community of faith." Will this collective THANK YOU speak for me in my plea for mercy?

"The quality of mercy is not strained.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed:
It blesseth him[her] that gives and him[her] that takes."
--William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

Do Sacraments Reflect Our Image of God?

So many families are involved in the preparation of the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation with their children. How does God filter into this whole mix of our entering the sacramental life of the community of faith and following the call of discipleship? I believe our image of God reflects our attitude toward the sacraments. Since faith is a gift, God's presence to us usually is mixed with our own vision of who God is. Our theology may have a clue. Is God lover, friend, guide, leader, Other, presence beyond ourselves, Creator, Omniscient Being, or . . .? Depending how we continue to discover God in our life, the sacraments may take on new meaning. That message will be communicated to our children. The sacraments connect us with God, the community and ourselves. They are pivotal signposts that mark our living more fully our faith within the community. We are not alone in this journey to God. The sacraments remind us that we need each other. The sacraments help us claim the sacredness of our life in God. They bring us to our knees and help us to remember we need God.

At this time of the year as we look into the faces of our children in their preparation for a renewed life in God, may we as the adults find our way toward the God who loves us and continues to show us mercy. As Francis Thompson called God, "the Hound of Heaven," may we discover how God continually comes after us in the sacraments, reminding us of his Love, MERCY, forgiveness and desire for us. "Our search for God is as close as the love reflected in the faces of our children

The Gospel or the Culture, That is the Question?

When Pope Francis wrote his first encyclical “The Joy of the Gospel” do you think he was driven by what he feels trumps the Gospel in our 21st century, THE CULTURE? This document begins with the words, “The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.” He presented 7 challenges:

Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of **missionary enthusiasm, the joy of evangelization, hope, community, the Gospel, the ideal of fraternal love, and missionary vigor.**

He invites the reader to “recover the original freshness of the Gospel, finding “new Venues” and “new paths of creativity” without enclosing Jesus in our “dull categories.” The exhortation best read via Bill Huebsch’s edited edition will be an offering this Lent at St. Augustine’s, gathering other seekers to explore its wisdom and zeal against a vapid screen, we call our “culture.”

Is Pope Francis’ On Care of our Common Home (Laudato Si) an Option or a Must Read?

If a person cares about humanity, the common good, climate change and an authentic view of life this exhortation may be the answer. The naysayers can’t believe that our pope could proclaim what some have been saying for decades but Pope Francis makes his words not a choice but an absolute if we all care about our common humanity. That however, may be the pivotal point. The common good and our common Earth may not find a home for the

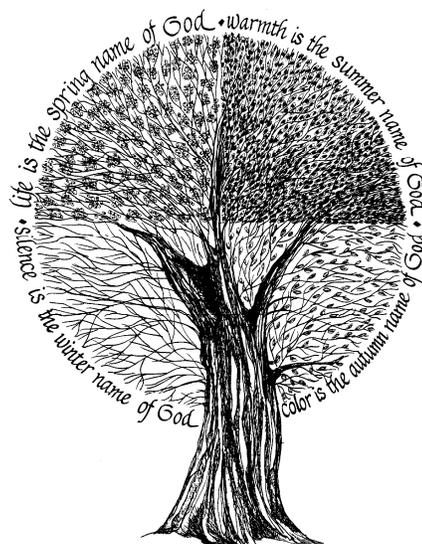
rugged individuals that populate our planet. To protect our resources, to guarantee equal access to all, to garden the sustainability of our planet rather than grow greed are some of the cliffhangers that the Holy Father offers the readers. Join a group this Lent and discover what challenges grasp the roots of the Pope’s message. Can we afford to do anything less?

We are called to live as Jesus lived,
Loving and forgiving one another. . .
Helping to spread peace, working for
justice,
And especially sending LOVE and
warm thoughts to you!

—from Christina Grimes’ 4A3 class

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The Augmenter logo expands our vision of God through the seasons. It reminds us of God’s presence in the here and now of our community in Larchmont, where most of the streets are named after trees. It takes us into a new realm of naming God through the signs of the seasons and makes greater the marvel of who God is—life, warmth, color and silence.