

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

Encounter Lent

We are called to build a culture of encounter.



Jesus made that clear from the way he lived, the message he preached. Pope Francis makes that clear by his own daily example. And we have a host of holy men and women who have come before us, who have gone to the margins of society so that every member of our human family might know the love of God.

Now, it's our turn. With the spiritual pillars of Lent at our disposal, we set out on a 40-day journey, a journey of encounter with ourselves, our neighbors and our God.

§ Through **prayer**, we encounter Christ, present in the faces of every member of our human family, so often still walking that long road to Calvary.

§ Through **fasting**, we encounter our own obstacles, those things about ourselves that prevent us from loving God and neighbor.

§ Through **almsgiving**, we encounter our brothers and sisters around the world, asking what we can give up so that others might have life to the fullest.

Lent is our time to **encounter**, to cultivate a spirit of global solidarity. CRS Rice Bowl is our tool, Catholic Relief Services' Lenten faith-in-action program for families and faith communities, a vehicle through which the stories of communities around the world can be shared, an invitation

through which our prayers and Lenten sacrifices can change lives.

Through CRS Rice Bowl, we hear stories from our brothers and sisters in need worldwide, and devote our Lenten prayers, fasting and gifts to change the lives of the poor. Each day of Lent, individuals are invited to use the Lenten Calendar— included with every CRS Rice Bowl—to guide their Lenten almsgiving. These daily almsgiving activities—for example, give 25 cents for every faucet found in your home—help families reflect on the realities of our brothers and sisters around the world and how they can be in solidarity during the Lenten season.

How will you contribute to the culture of encounter this Lent?

Our young people will receive their rice bowls on March 1, Ash Wednesday and on Sunday, March 5, 2017. Please encourage full and honest participation by every child to alleviate world hunger.

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.

BASIC PRAYERS: Is there Validity to Committing Them to Memory?

Our Catholic heritage is still in vogue, I believe. Knowledge of the Our Father, Hail Mary, Prayer of Praise (Glory Be) is still essential to the repertoire of a young person's faith life. Some elements, though formal, are still at the heart of our faith tradition and need to be acquired. Most young people appreciate and desire this knowledge and foundation. Many are proud to say they know their basic prayers. They become a template for their own prayer life. I add to that repertoire, the Apostles' Creed and the Act of Contrition.

The catechists have been working with their class to achieve this goal. Grades 1 through 4 are still in the process but have received their glow in the dark rosary to inspire them. Grades 5 through 8 were tested on the writing of the Our Father and Hail Mary in January. About half of these young people know the prayers but there are still those who need to learn them. We will try again in

February and each month until the goal is accomplished, while adding on the other prayers so the repertoire is increased.

During the gathering time as each session begins, I offer the invitation to go into their "heart space." Several kinds of practices are introduced via music, mindfulness, breathing techniques and DVDs that instruct. A modified form of contemplative prayer is being taught.

I believe that we are all born with a desire for God. Our response to that desire is prayer. Our religious education program instills this life of prayer while opening the Jesus story each week through the Pflaum Gospel Weeklies.

My strongest belief is that parents are the primary religious educators. Without the faith life being instilled in the home, religious education classes are only a superficial attempt at passing on our faith. Parents are asked to give our rich tradition of prayer in all its forms to our children and young people.



On Sunday, April 2, 2017 we will offer a FOOD FAST for our STAY Connected Youth (high school and young adults). A group of youth leaders will coordinate this venture with Sister Suzanne for 7 hours from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm in Kenny Hall. Prior to the FAST the youth will ask parishioners, family and friends to sponsor them for this adventure. Catholic Relief Services will receive the money to forward the cause of the common good to alleviate world hunger. The youth will only consume water during the FAST.

EMBRACING UNCOMMON GOOD FOR THE GOOD OF ALL! Pope Francis is the inspiration for this theme. When he wrote the encyclical *Laudato Si'* (On Care for Our Common Home) in 2015, the Holy Father challenged all of us to remember that the earth is our common home. It's not just mine or yours—it's ours. We are all called to care for God's creation, and to care especially for the poor and vulnerable who are most affected by climate change. We are called to make choices that help all of God's people, not just ourselves. In other words, we are called to do uncommon good, so that the common good can be realized! This Food Fast challenges young people to care for all God's creation. Participants will discover the impact of climate change on the world's most vulnerable people. **Through experience, prayer, art, social media and discussion, young people grow to understand the concept of the "common good" and how they can harness their talents and resources to promote it and effect change. The FOOD FAST will culminate at the 5:00 pm Mass followed by a supper of soup and bread for the participants sponsored by parents of the teens.**

Youth will discover how Catholic Relief Services supports people who are hungry in acquiring food and gaining long-term food security. Central to this exploration of faith and justice, participants will be challenged as disciples of Jesus to discover their roles in eliminating hunger across the globe. Teens should contact Sr. Suzanne.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation — an Encounter with Jesus' Forgiveness

During the month of March there will be opportunities for the sacrament provided to our children on Wednesdays and Sundays during their regularly scheduled classes.

Our second grade will receive First Reconciliation on Saturday, March 11 at prayer services at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm.