

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

Happiness is not what makes us grateful. . . It is gratefulness that makes us happy.

—Brother David Steindl-Rast

As I look back on this year I want to celebrate! God has visited his people! An attitude of gratitude is my response. The list could be endless but sharing the many reasons are mine.

- ◆ 610 young people and their families are the **community** growing as **disciples of Christ**. (We don't use the term, CCD anymore. It is out of date. We refer to our **Religious Ed program**).
- ◆ Over 75 catechists, catechist assistants and volunteers teach the Gospel by their example, witness, and proclaiming God's Word. Our lectionary-based program (*Pflaum Gospel Weeklies*) directs our teaching of the faith via the Sunday readings at developmentally appropriate levels: **Promise** (Gr. 1) **Good News** (Grade 2 and 3) **Venture** (Grades 4, 5 and 6) and **Visions** (Grades 7 and 8).
- ◆ Each class begins by gathering in Kenny Hall for our "**Heart Space**." We engage in **mindfulness practices** and visual meditations through media to meet God.
- ◆ Wednesday First Graders gather in the cafeteria for **music and movement** before their formal class.
- ◆ Every Sunday Sister Suzanne affords children from ages 4 through 9 the Liturgy of the Word for children during the 10:30 Sunday Mass. Mr. Michael Ward directs a children's choir during that Mass and our adult instrumentalists provide the music with our master musician at the piano. Mara Bardinelli Herman donated the piano that offers a wide range of music for Mr. Ward's fingers to fly on the ivories!
- ◆ 84 children have met the Lord in their **First Reconciliation** and that same number will receive their **First Eucharist**.
- ◆ The sacrament of **Confirmation** will be conferred on 52 high school candidates on June 11 by Bishop Dominick Lagonegro.
- ◆ **33 teens, including 18 of our Confirmation candidates, and 10 adult facilitators engaged in a 7 hour FOOD FAST** to support the **Catholic Relief Services'** work to help those in most need around the world to the tune of raising **\$3579.00** through the generous efforts of sponsors--parishioners, parents and friends.
- ◆ The **Living Stations of the Cross** was enacted by older teens via a prayer service for Grades 5 through 9.
- ◆ Through the generous efforts of our children and young people \$2500.00 was raised for Catholic Relief Services' Lenten **Rice Bowl**.
- ◆ We will celebrate **Msgr. Thomas Kelly's 50th anniversary as a priest** with special surprises from the Religious Ed young people on **May 14 during the 10:30 Family Liturgy and on May 21st at the noon Mass with a reception following**.
- ◆ Grades 5 through 8 are offered the privilege of a concert by the **Rhodes College Singers on May 24 at 7:30 p.m. in our church**. What a way to celebrate the year of religious education!
- ◆ A Zero Waste Reduction program has been introduced in Kenny Hall by interested parishioners.
- ◆ An **appreciation dinner for Catechists, Assistant Catechists and volunteers** will be held on **Wednesday, June 14 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Davenport Club**.
- ◆ I did not break any bones this year! Growing in our faith life continues at St. Augustine's community of believers! God lives, moves and has his being within us and in all we do.

Family Registration for Rel. Ed. for 2017-2018

To honor families and their many financial responsibilities the registration fee will stay the same:

\$350 for one child, **\$450** for two children, **\$550** for three or more children. In addition, the sacrament fee for those receiving **First Reconciliation** and **First Eucharist** is **\$100**. For **Confirmation** that occurs in ninth grade or at another year in high school is **\$200**.

But families may sign up for a payment plan by months, quarters or half year amounts to meet the whole payment. An **Early Bird discount** or **\$50** is offered to those paying the whole amount by **June 1**. **The deadline for all registrations is June 30, 2017**. **The registration form has been revised**. **Inclusions and changes reflect the**

suggestions of catechists and parents.

Sunday classes for Grade 1 through 8 begin on September 17 from 9:00 to 10:15 p.m.

Wednesday classes for Grades 2 through 8 begin on September 27. Gr. 2 - 4 from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. Gr. 5 - 8 will be held at a new time from 7:00 to 8:15 p.m.

Wednesday classes for Grade 1 begin on October 4 from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m.

Confirmation classes for 9th grade or older high school candidates begin on October 15 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. two Sundays a month.

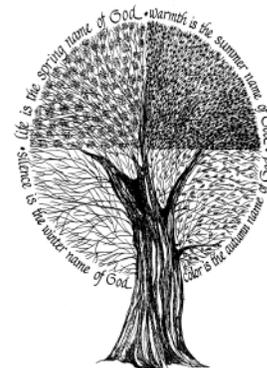
The new calendar will appear on the website in June.

Why Do We Go to Sunday Mass?

Throughout my nine years at St. Augustine's, catechists have inundated me with the fact that the children and young people in their classes don't attend Sunday Mass. The lectionary-based curriculum we offer is based on the Sunday readings so it goes without saying that the import of the lessons are lost without the participation in our Sunday liturgy. Some young children are mystified when their class visits our church as a group. They say it is their first time ever, within a church. Our older young people are unfamiliar with church gestures and behavior when they attend Mass on a Wednesday evening a few times during the year. Recently I have been teaching some of the fifth through eighth grade classes. I want to offer some of the insights our 7th and 8th grade learners shared when they had an opportunity to write down anything they wanted me to know:

- ♥ I don't go to church every Sunday but we go more than we used to.
- ♥ I hope my schedule clears from so much soccer so I could go to Mass and have no excuses.
- ♥ In the future I would like to go to Mass more often and force my family to go.
- ♥ My faith is important because it keeps me centered. It helps me stay calm when I need a place to go and stay focused on goals.
- ♥ I liked talking about why we go to church. It gave me more time to think about the benefits of going and a reason to go.
- ♥ I want to go to church more and be more active in my Catholic community.
- ♥ I really enjoy coming to Rel. Ed. I feel that it is a time when I can openly express my faith in Jesus and in God without being judged.

I am always amazed, gratified and encouraged whenever I teach. Our young people have discovered that our "heart space" (going within) is a place to find God among the myriad ways that they continue to discover. The Mass has become a more desirous experience and for many the music is a way for them to relate and express the inner workings of God within. Our children do love to sing. Michael Ward has provided a means for them to engage in meaningful participation. Some have expressed the value of being with "the community of believers." They want to **belong** to a faith community, not only having a personal relationship with God but also a communal relationship with God and each other.



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.