



FROM THE HEART OF

The Pelican

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**ALL YOU BEASTS, WILD AND TAME, BLESS THE LORD;
PRAISE AND EXALT HIM ABOVE ALL FOREVER.
(DAN 3:81)**

DEAR FAMILY AND FRIENDS,

IN *THE WIZARD OF OZ*, DOROTHY discovers at the end that she has had the ability to return home to Kansas all along, by a simple click of her ruby slippers. Often a very precious gift is right under our nose and we don't realize it. One such gift which is not always appreciated is the privilege of receiving the Precious Blood of Jesus at Mass. Although most faith-filled Catholics are grateful for the gift of the Eucharist, what is not always sufficiently treasured is the privilege of receiving the Precious Blood from the chalice at communion time. From the time of the Reformation, the Western Church had restricted communion among the laity to the sacred host, partly to emphasize the truth that Christ is present—body, blood, soul



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and divinity—under the appearance of bread and wine. In our day, the Church has brought back the opportunity for everyone to receive communion under both forms. What is the significance of this? Certainly, Christ's words at the Last Supper, "Take and eat . . . take and drink" can never reduce receiving Him under both forms to an unnecessary redundancy! To appreciate its significance, we need to understand the meaning of "chalice" in Scripture and how it was understood in the Early Church. In both, symbolism unlocks a deep meaning in Christ's action of offering his disciples the chalice. First, after James and John asked Christ if they could sit at his right and left in the kingdom, Christ responded: "Can you drink the *chalice* that I will drink?" (Mt 20:22). Then in the garden of Gethsemane, Christ prayed: "Father, if it be possible, let this *chalice* pass from me" (Mt 26:39). The same sense of chalice as "suffering" is echoed in John 18:1: "The *chalice* which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" The link between Christ's suffering and the chalice of his blood is clear in the narrative of the Last Supper: "And taking the *chalice*, he gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink this all of you. For this is my blood of the new testament, which *shall be shed* for many unto remission of sins" (Mt 26:27-28). The chalice is, therefore, symbolic of suffering.

The Early Christians had a deep appreciation of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and—in line with the biblical understanding of the chalice as suffering—they also realized that saying "Amen" as they came forward to take the chalice, was saying "yes" as James and John did to accepting the chalice in their own lives. In other words, they were saying "yes" to all the sufferings which accompany one as a

Christian, even to saying “yes” to laying down their lives in martyrdom if that were required of them. Moreover, they understood that the chalice of Christ’s blood strengthened them for that conflict. In a letter written in the mid-250s A.D., St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, writes of his decision to reinstate those excommunicated brethren (who had denied Christ during a recent persecution) and who had also been doing the required penance up to that point. Their period of penance was to be shortened because a new persecution was about to break out and Cyprian felt that these people needed the Eucharist and the chalice in order to strengthen them for the martyrdom that might be asked of them. Regarding the chalice he writes: “For how do we teach or incite them to shed their blood for the confession of His Name if we deny the Blood of Christ to those who are about to fight? Or how do we make them fit for the chalice of martyrdom if we do not first admit them to drink the chalice of the Lord in the Church by the right of Communion?” (Ep. 57.2) Is it a mere coincidence that the Holy Spirit has inspired the Church to bring back the use of the chalice in our own times? We too live in an age of persecution of Christians; many in the last hundred years have given the supreme sacrifice of their lives for Christ. We all need to be strengthened to endure persecution joyfully and to be ready for martyrdom if that is asked of us. Bearing this in mind, the next time you have the opportunity to receive Christ’s Precious Blood from the chalice, I invite you to ponder what you are doing as you approach to receive the Lord. When you hear: “The Blood of Christ,” let your “Amen” mean: I believe that this is truly the Blood of Christ, who died for me that I might be saved. I accept the Chalice of Salvation as a sign that I am willing to lay down my life for Jesus, and I claim the power and strength contained in His Blood so that I might receive through It the courage I need for all that He asks of me. Amen! ✚

IT’S BEEN ANOTHER QUIET YEAR of monastic life with its daily rounds of prayer, study and work. Besides that, Sr. Gertrude continued to teach part time at Christ the King High School, mainly Latin with some classes in Sophomore Theology. The school has yet to hire a full time Latin instructor, so she’s been asked to teach Latin again this coming year, hoping that she’ll be able to segue back into Theology for the following year. She and Sr. Scholastica also continued their work with the Women of Joy, Sr. Gertrude giving the women a year-long course on Prayer and Sr. Scholastica watching over the little ones so that the mothers could attend the lectures.

Sr. Scholastica’s new ventures have ranged from learning ancient Greek — so she can read the New Testament in its original language — to milking her first goat(!), to planting a garden in pots on our patio. I’ll leave her to tell you more about the latter in an article below.

Sr. Gertrude gave a Lenten mission on the Passion at Holy Spirit Parish in March and spoke on *Lectio Divina* at a Women’s Retreat Day at St. Aloysius Parish in April. Both were well attended, with the participants eager to grow in their love of the Lord. Such receptivity brings about the flow of many graces, which was evident in the joy and enthusiasm of everyone.

On Mercy Sunday — and the day JP II and John XXIII were canonized — we met up with one of our friends from Florida, Jackie Schatz, who was visiting North Carolina for a wedding. Since none of us had ever been to Chimney Rock National Park, we arranged to climb the mountain together, which — although



Chimney Rock National Park

short — proved to be both strenuous and exhilarating! The significance of the day and our terrain continually reminded us of John Paul II, himself no mean mountaineer who even as Pope would escape the Vatican nearly every Thursday to climb the hills around Rome. Surrounded by the natural wonder of creation, the heart spontaneously erupts into singing the praises of God!

As we were preparing this issue of *The Pelican*, we were also looking forward to our summer retreat. As you may recall, we drove out to New Mexico last summer to make our retreat at Our Lady of the Desert. The road trip and the retreat were a perfect spiritual get-away! This year, since **Abbot Damien** from St. Andrew's Abbey in Valyermo, California, invited Sr. Gertrude to give their guests one of the Abbey's scheduled weekend retreats (scheduled for July 11–13), we will take the opportunity to arrive early and make our own retreat there beforehand. We promise to pray for all of you!

Our Oblate group continues to grow. We have several new “oblate novices” and two of those whose year of formation is coming to a close (**Isabel and Lucy**) will make their final commitment later this summer. It is a joy to see all of them growing in their love of monastic spirituality. Thank you, Oblates, for your generous gift of yourself to the Lord through the Rule and teachings of St. Benedict! ✚



Jackie Schatz and Sr. Gertrude (in her work habit) at Chimney Rock National Park



This original drawing was a Christmas gift from the young (7 year old) artist Colette Morell of herself with the two Sisters!

Our Container Garden

BY SR. SCHOLASTICA AUGUSTE

IT HAS BEEN A RECURRING thought that I should start a garden for our community. My inspiration has come from several sources, firstly from a former roommate who wholly believed in organic companion gardening. Often, when I visited her garden it always looked so pretty, yet, so productive, that my visits always left me thinking that someday I would like to imitate her method. My second source of inspiration came from Sr. Gertrude, who, in 2012 came home with three vegetables for me to plant in the ground surrounding our house. Until that moment I had completely forgotten about my desire to have a garden. This first experience of gardening for me was very rewarding and so I had every intention of continuing to garden when we moved to our current location. My third and perhaps my greatest source of inspiration is from the counsel of our dear father St. Benedict. In his Rule, St. Benedict makes reference to having adequate work for the brothers to do at allotted times throughout the day. One type of work which has been associated with monasteries from their inception is gardening. In the 6th century when western monasticism was becoming increasingly popular, leaving the monastery was widely discouraged. A primary reason why anyone would, and still has to, leave the monastery is to obtain food. A garden is one way to curtail the brothers having to leave the monastery as it means a ready supply of food. Another reason why a garden was a welcome addition to a monastic community is because there is never a lack of work in a garden, which, in turn, would translate to there being less time available for the monks to be idle, as, in St. Benedict's very words, "Idleness is the enemy of the soul" (RB 48). There is, yet



still, another benefit to having a garden in a monastery, that is, to reduce the monotony of a day of mainly prayer, as this could lead to a host of problems within the monastic setting.

For a moment the idea of a garden did not seem feasible to me since our new location has no backyard. However, one day, whilst I was doing some research on the internet I happened to stumble upon a photo of a zucchini plant in a pot. In my limited knowledge of gardening it had never occurred to me that vegetables could be grown in pots. You can only imagine my excitement when I discovered a whole new scope of gardening. I then avidly began to search the internet to see whether I could make my desire to have a garden a reality, in spite of our lack of a backyard. Within a short time I realized that this was a potentially costly project and so I again abandoned my desire to have a garden with a prayer to the Lord asking Him to make it happen if it is His will. To my greatest and pleasantest surprise one morning as I walked out of our front door, something that I rarely did, there were on our entrance stairs, four bags of potting soil, a few empty pots and four herb plants ready to be repotted. It turned out that a very kind neighbor to whom I had expressed an interest in having a garden, dropped these supplies at our front door for me. I took this very kind gesture as the Lord saying that it was okay to have a garden, and so, a few weeks later we are awaiting eggplants, cucumbers, yellow crookneck squashes, peppers, and tomatoes. ✚

More Teachings on

ANGER

FROM THE WRITINGS OF ST. AUGUSTINE

BY SR. GERTRUDE GILLETTE

*Sixth in a Series on Augustine's
Teaching on Anger*

WE CONTINUE IN THIS issue to look at Augustine's teaching on anger as he transmitted it in his sermons. We have learned that anger—when it is not properly dealt with—destroys a person from within. Augustine says it masterfully: “Some people come and pray in the church banging their heads on the ground and asking God to kill their enemies! Yes, let God kill your enemy, i.e. your [own] enmity and animosity and let him save this human being, restored to you as a brother”(!). Anger inflicts far worse (spiritual) destruction on its subject than ever it does on the object of its wrath. It is therefore a vice that must be dealt with seriously. In our last issue, we presented the Great Spiritual Doctor's advice to his congregation on how *not* to deal with their anger, namely by denying it, by nurturing resentment or by seeking revenge. In this issue, we turn to the five positive ways which Augustine presents to his people for dealing with their anger.

PROPER WAYS TO RESPOND TO ONE'S ANGER

A. Turning anger on itself (or yourself! And not upon your enemy!) Because the real enemy is within, Augustine advises his people

to take up the quarrel with their own hearts. And what does it mean to turn anger upon oneself? It means to repent: “Everyone, after all, who repents is being angry with himself; being sorry for what he has done, he works off his anger on himself.” An example of one who did so is the prodigal son; he “returned to his heart,” was angry with himself and was ready to do penance. Augustine realizes that anger can be a struggle, but God is there with us and wants to help us gain this victory more than he wants to give us external things: “See to it, my children.... Put your heart into the fight, as much as ever you can. And if you see your anger standing up to challenge you, plead to God to help you against it; may God make you the conqueror of yourself; may God make you the conqueror, not of some enemy outside, but of your own temper inside. He will be there, and he'll do it, you know. He would much rather we asked him for this than for rain.” Redirecting angry feelings back on oneself leads to a more conscious personal realization of the evil of one's angry thoughts and actions. This leads directly to his next point:

B. Taking personal responsibility by admission. A major step out of the darkness of anger is to reflect honestly on one's behavior and to take responsibility for it by acknowledging one's guilt. Admit your sinfulness: “Say ‘I've done wrong;’ say ‘I've sinned.’ You won't die when you say this; you certainly will die if you don't say it.” But the admittance must go further than a mere interior acknowledgment of it before oneself and God. Anger usually—and animosities always—affect another human being. Often the humility needed to “own” our own sinfulness needs to extend to humbling ourselves before another person. Augustine humorously describes both states as being “flat on your face” ... with a twist:

But of course, people find it easy to give offense, and difficult to restore harmony. Ask pardon, he says, of the person you have offended, the person you have harmed. He replies, “I won't humble myself.” At least

listen to your God, if you insist on ignoring your brother: *Whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.* You are unwilling to humble yourself, you that have fallen flat on your face anyway? There's a world of difference between someone humbling himself, and someone flat on his face. You're already flat on your face and you refuse to humble yourself? You would have every right to say, "I refuse to lower myself," if you had refused to come hurtling down in the first place.

One therefore needs to acknowledge and accept responsibility for one's anger before another. Again, this leads directly into the next response:

C. Asking for forgiveness. Augustine is aware that it is difficult to undo the damage we have done, especially when it requires humbling ourselves. He nevertheless confronts the "many" who are "ashamed to beg pardon," or won't say "Forgive me," telling them that such refusals are "weeds" which he wishes that God would uproot from his field, "that is from your hearts"! Not every attempt to be reconciled ends favorably, however. The other party may not want harmony and may therefore refuse to lay down his or her own anger. What should a person do in that case?

If you said ["forgive me the wrong I did you"] from the bottom of your heart, if with genuine humility, not with a pretense of love, as God can see in your heart how you said it, but the other fellow refused to forgive you, don't be anxious....appeal to the Lord of both of you.

As long as you are willing to make up, even if the other party is not, you've done your duty, you've paid your debt.

D. Forgiving. The other side of the reconciliation process is forgiving: "Forgive absolutely.... Forgive, forgive from the bottom of your hearts.... So if you are angry, don't let [today's] sun go down upon your anger." In one sermon Augustine says that he has given the person who is withholding pardon from

someone asking for it, a good talking to. To refuse to forgive is not an option; we must "Lavish pardon on those who are sorry." But what about those who have not asked for it? Are we obliged to grant pardon to one who shows no remorse for his or her offense? Augustine makes no distinction: even if a person is not asking for pardon—forgive him (or her)!

As in the case of one asking for forgiveness, if a person is careful to do his or her part in the process, even if the other party does not respond with the same desire for harmony, the first individual is exonerated before God. As for the uncooperative person, he or she should take note that the name of Christian should not be applied to someone who is unwilling to put an end to animosities.

Sometimes a third party may be necessary in the reconciliation process. You may be willing to forgive another person, but perhaps the offender refuses to ask for forgiveness. The third person could "scold the offender into first asking pardon from you." On your part, "all you must do is to be ready to forgive, totally ready to forgive him from the heart." If the offender delays in asking, then occasion should be taken to pray for this person to receive a spirit of forgiveness. What is more important is one's own willingness to forgive: "If you are ready to forgive, you have already forgiven."

A final consideration concerns the role which forgiveness plays in binding and loosening a person from sin. Although it fell to the bishop to forgive major sins in the public arena, nevertheless every Christian was and is expected to play a non-sacramental, but vital, role in binding and loosening a fellow Christian through forgiveness. Forgiveness *loosens*—in the sense of freeing—the other from his or her sin, as the following text shows: "How is what you say [viz. 'forgive us ... as we forgive'—in the Our Father] going to be true, if you have not desired to *loosen* your brother from sin?" Although this should not be taken in a strictly legalistic sense, nevertheless there is an important element here which points to unforgiveness as a

chain fettering the unforgiven person: to be forgiven is truly to be set free.]

E. **Refraining from being party to others' enmities.** And what should you do when you find yourself between two friends who are at odds with each other? Each "friend" would like you to take sides with him or her against the other. Augustine nobly advises a person during this time of trial and testing: "Remain the friend of both of them.... If you hear nasty things about each of them from the other, don't betray them to the other.... You have heard a word from an angry man, from someone who's been deeply hurt, who has flared up in a temper. Let it die in you.... After all, if it stays in you, it won't burst you."

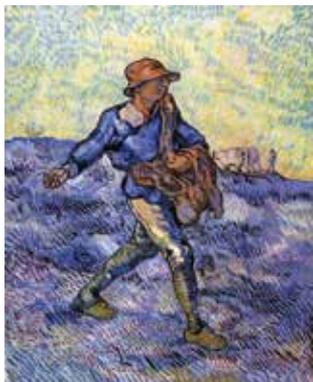
CONCLUSION

Augustine makes it clear that although anger is a "human" response, it is nevertheless a dangerous passion of the human heart. Unless it is eradicated promptly, it grows — sometimes almost imperceptibly — into many different strains of animosities. Once anger has developed into whatever stage — from a quick angry outburst to years of hard-hearted hatred — Augustine offers the consoling truth

PRAISE REPORT: After our last issue of *The Pelican*, one reader (Tracy Nunley) wrote informing us of a good outcome to Sr. Gertrude's book:

"I was a care-giver for an elderly lady who had anger issues. One day we were at her doctor's office and she saw me reading Sr. Gertrude's book on Anger. Karen asked if she could read it when I was done. I was near the end, so shortly afterwards I lent it to her. After reading it, she apologized for being so difficult and said she wished that she had read it sooner, since my time with her was coming to a close. Two months later she passed from this life, with a little more understanding of virtue. Praise God!"

that, with the help of Christ, all enmity can be put aside in a definitive manner. Humbly asking for pardon and forgiving from the heart restores a person to communion with God and with one's neighbor. Anger need not have the last word. By taking control of their lives with the tools that the word of God offers them, all Christians can live in true Christian harmony and freedom. ✚



*A Sower went out to sow...
Some seed fell upon good
ground and yielded grain,
some a hundredfold, some sixty,
some thirty. Mt 13:3, 8*

THE SOWERS' CLUB

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF YOU WHO have been so kind to us this past year. Your prayers, support, and kindness have touched us deeply. Please be assured that you are in our daily prayers. We would also like to express our gratitude to all our dear friends and readers who belong to the Sowers' Club — thank you for the generous donation of \$100 which you send to us once a year. Your generosity is a terrific help to us at this time when we have only part-time employment. For those of you who have not yet joined the Sowers' Club, we invite you to consider doing so. You Sowers are planting the seeds which God in due time will turn into a harvest. Thank you again — all you "old" and "new" Sowers — for thinking of us this year. Please find our mailing address on page 2 (in the credit box) and include any particular intentions that you would like us to remember in our daily prayers for you. And please remember us in your prayers as well! God's gracious blessings upon you!

— *The Sisters*