

# SAINT AUGUSTINE'S HOUSE

## NEWSLETTER

Lent A.D. 2008

✠ PAX

The Paschal Candle is lighted at the Easter Vigil and then is used at the Services throughout all of Eastertide. It is inscribed with a cross, the letters Alpha and Omega above and below, and the four numerals of the current year in the four corners of the cross. At the beginning of the Easter Vigil this inscription is traced with the words: "Christ, yesterday and today, the Beginning and the End, Alpha and Omega; His are all times and all ages; to Him be glory and dominion, through all the ages of eternity" The Paschal candle is thus inscribed with the current year, but as the words of the blessing make clear, it is really the other way around. In the Easter Liturgy it is the current year that is being inscribed, marked, stamped with the Cross and Resurrection of Christ.



In the jargon of the news media, the Resurrection of Christ is a "developing story." It is an event that is still being played out in current history, as it shapes and influences new human lives. The story of the Resurrection is in, fact, almost entirely the story of the people whose lives have been affected and transformed by it. The Gospels themselves proclaim the Resurrection through the experience of the earliest disciples: Mary Magdalene, St. Peter, St. John, St. Thomas, the other disciples, and the crowd listening to St. Peter's sermon on Pentecost. The Acts of the Apostles tells of the dramatic encounter of the persecutor Saul with the Risen Lord and makes clear that this encounter is an ongoing experience as more and more people are confronted with the Gospel of the Resurrection and are transformed by it.

The Resurrection Life of Christ is intimately interwoven with the lives of believers; it is inseparable from the life of His Church through the ages. It cannot be examined by itself as an anomalous event, a real but isolated phenomenon in the past. Christ Jesus has been raised to be the head of His Body the Church, He is the first born of the dead, the pioneer of our salvation to lead many sons to glory. The Resurrection story is still unfolding in the lives of believers in the current year 2008. Believers today as in the early Church are baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ "so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." God is calling us as well to know "the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe,

according to the working of his great might which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead..."

In his recent encyclical Pope Benedict the XVI reflected on the meaning of Christian hope. He begins his letter with a quotation from St. Paul: "In hope we were saved." Hope is the way we experience the fact of salvation; it is the concrete form that redemption in Christ takes in the lives of believers. Christian hope gives a way forward to the one who embraces it. "The dark door of time, of the future, has been thrown open. The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life."

We see this dynamic forward thrust above all in the Resurrection Gospels. The Risen One is the one who has gone ahead. "He is not here; he has risen... behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him." With Mary Magdalene we cannot touch Him in such a way as to hold Him back. The experience of the Resurrection is always joined with discipleship, with following the Lord in a way that was not possible or imaginable before His Resurrection: "I am with you always, to the close of the age."

This present year 2008 is the furthest reach in time of that "age," of that "Galilee" where we must go if we would see the Lord. This present year is the place and our present lives the situation where we have been sent to find Him in faith and hope. The date of this year should have a sacred significance to us. It is not a meaningless number, like the serial number on a washing machine. It is a year that invites us to live in the light of Christ's Resurrection as the inscription on the Paschal Candle suggests.

There is a reminder of this is also in the "A.D." that is sometimes placed before the calendar year. This comes from the Latin "*Anno Domini*" which is usually translated "The Year of our Lord." In the study of history it is used as opposed to B.C.,

"Before Christ." However, its original and still most important use is to indicate the relationship of the year to Jesus Christ and His Lordship over it. I put "A.D." on this newsletter to indicate my understanding of time and history not because I thought you would wonder in what era I was writing.

There will undoubtedly be many things this year that will try to roll the stone back over the door of the tomb, to take away hope, to shut the door to the future to us. An angel of the Lord will need to descend from heaven again to roll back the stone. For us that angel will be the message of the Resurrection proclaimed in the Gospel and celebrated in the Sacraments and Liturgy. It is not from the past but from the future—a future opened to us also—that the Lord addresses us: "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore."

Toward the end of the *Exultet*, the proclamation and praise that begins the Easter Vigil, we pray before the newly lighted Paschal Candle that it "will continue to vanquish the darkness of this night and be mingled with the lights of heaven." And it is, in fact, our practice here at St. Augustine's to leave the Paschal Candle burning through the night to the Mass of Easter Sunday morning. However there is surely a deeper meaning to this prayer. We are asking that the Light of Christ's Resurrection will continue to vanquish the recurring shadows that arise to darken human history in our time and to vanquish as well the fears and anxieties that so often darken our own souls. If "His are all times and all ages," then the "Light of Christ rising in glory" still has the power to dispel the darkness of this age and of our own hearts and minds.

Sincerely,

Fr. Richard G. Herbel



Rejoice now, all heavenly choirs of angels, and celebrate the divine mysteries with exultation;... Exult, also, O earth, enlightened with such radiance; and, made brilliant by the splendor of the eternal King, know that the ancient darkness has been banished from all the world. *—from the Exultet*

**News & Notes**

It has become a part of the Christmas Season to pray Vespers and have supper with our friends the Dominican Sisters of Mt. Thabor. Fr. Richard and our associate members Daniel and Barbara Susan kept this tradition on the Second Day of Christmas, the Feast of St. Stephen.

This winter Fr. Richard has enjoyed the company of the sisters more often. At the Christmas gathering the sisters asked him to conduct a class on chanting the psalms, and so he has visited them about twice a month. It has been a mutually rewarding experience.

The middle of January Fr. Richard traveled to Oklahoma to visit his mother and other family. The

visit was timed to be with his mother for her cataract surgery, which went very well.

The Sunday Fr. Richard was away Fr. John Cochran celebrated the Mass with Fr. Thomas McElwey assisting. We are grateful also to our resident associate David Blythe for his assistance at the Divine Office and in the retreat house.

In January we received word that our long time friend and supporter Pastor Paul Kokenda died in Pittsburgh, where he had served his entire ministry. He was remembered here with a memorial Mass celebrated on January 30th. May light perpetual shine upon him.

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

Gifts are gratefully acknowledged in memory of

JOAN E. BAKER  
 ROBERT E. BAKER  
 DOROTHY M. BEST  
 GENE and ARYLISS EVANS  
 ARLENE M. GAGO  
 JOAN W. MILLER  
 ARTHUR CARL KREINHEDER  
 PAUL F. KOKENDA

and in honor of

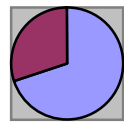
JOE DAILEY  
 GEORGE WECKMAN

**Chapel Sponsors**

**APRIL** by the Rev. Ronald C. Brugger in honor of the 25th anniversary of the ordination of the Rev. Warren Shoberg.

**MAY** by Helen M. Herbel in memory of her brother Walter H. Hoeme.

A gift of \$1000 supports our use of the new chapel by paying the mortgage for a month.



<b>CHURCH LOAN</b>	
<b>Paid Off:</b>	<b>\$101,000</b>
<b>Still Owed:</b>	<b>\$44,000</b>

## New Building

Despite rather severe winter weather this year here in Michigan, work has continued steadily on the new residence and library building. Our contractor John Baker of The House Mechanic and his workman Todd Latta have braved both bitter cold and heavy snow. The weather has, of course, slowed progress at times, but very few work days have been missed due to the cold and snow. The basic structure of the building now stands complete with about 85% of the originally contracted work done.

A decision has been made to do additional work in the lower or library level even though it may mean taking a loan from the bank. For a number of reasons it is more efficient to do this work now rather than later. The work that needs to be done includes electrical wiring (\$3,500), the heating system (\$4,000), wall insulation (\$4,000), and dry wall (\$6,000). A floor covering and ceiling tile will also be needed but can wait for now.

Thanks to the persistence of our contractor we were finally able to locate suitable soil for a new septic field. While this represents an additional cost of \$9,000 over the earlier estimate, it is a great relief to have a sewage system that will operate entirely by gravity rather than depending on an ejector pump within the building.

We are very pleased with the progress on the new building and are grateful for the financial support that has made it possible for us to come this far. We anticipate now that the upper level will be ready for occupancy by Pentecost.

**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 are affiliated 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.**



Fr. Richard on the porch of the new residence



Contractor John Baker in the "Great Room"



The Library level awaiting completion