

THE ORATORY OF SAINTS

GREGORY & AUGUSTINE



TRADITIO | REVERENTIA | COMMUNITAS

Welcome to the Oratory of Saints Gregory and Augustine

The Oratory of Saints Gregory and Augustine is pleased to welcome you. We are an apostolate of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis faithful to the teachings of the Church and striving to grow as a family of faith through the celebration of the Traditional Latin Mass and other Sacraments.

In the First Book of *The Confessions*, the other great St. Augustine (of Hippo) wrote the following: "Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee." Whether you are curious about the traditional Latin Mass and interested in exploring its beauty, searching for a parish community where you and your family will feel at home, or seeking rest for your heart, we hope that the Oratory of Saints Gregory and Augustine can provide that respite for you.

Our bulletin serves to provide information about the weekly activities occurring here at the Oratory. Along with our website (www.stlouislatinmass.com), the bulletin is your point of contact with the ever-increasing activities at the Oratory. I hope this will give you some sense of the grace of God, the love of Jesus Christ, and work of the Holy Spirit in our midst. I am delighted that God has brought you here! **Oremus pro invicem!**

—The Very Reverend Monsignor C. Eugene Morris, Rector

MASS AND SACRAMENTS

Sunday Masses

- 6:30 am (Low Mass)
- 8:00 am (Low Mass)
- 10:00 am (High Mass)

Weekday Masses

- Monday thru Friday: 6:30 am & 12:15 pm
- First Friday: 6:30 pm
- Saturday: 8:15 am

Confession

- Sunday: 7:30 am – 10:30 am
- Monday thru Friday: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Wednesday: 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm
- First Friday: 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm
- Saturday: 7:00 am – 8:00 am

Divine Office

- Sunday: Prime @ 7:20 am; Terce @ 9:40 am; Vespers @ 2:30 pm
- Monday: Vespers @ 6 pm; Compline @ 6:30 pm
- Tuesday & Thursday: Compline @ 6:30 pm
- Wednesday: Vespers @ 6 pm; Compline @ 6:30 pm

Infant Baptism – Baptisms are normally scheduled on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Saturdays of the month beginning at 10:00 am. Families expecting newborns and anticipating that they will be baptized here at the Oratory should schedule their baptism at the earliest convenience by contacting the Oratory office.

Adult Baptism – If you are interested in becoming Catholic or if you are an adult Catholic not yet confirmed, please contact the Oratory office for more information about adult catechesis.

Matrimony – Please contact the Oratory office at least six months prior to the desired date for the rite of marriage. The date is reserved after consultation and confirmation from the Rector of the Oratory.

Extreme Unction/Visitation of the Sick – Contact the Oratory to arrange the sacrament either at home or in the hospital.

STAFF/ORGANIZATIONS

- **Rector:** Msgr. C. Eugene Morris
rector@oratorysga.org
- **Vice-Rector:** Fr. Michael Rennier
vicerector@oratorysga.org
- **Deacon:** Deacon Steve Pieper, MD
deacon@oratorysga.org
- **Administrative Assistant:** Donna Mueller
office@oratorysga.org
- **Facilities Manager:** Ben Schubert
facilities@oratorysga.org
- **Auxiliatrix:** Anna Kalinowski
auxiliatrix@oratorysga.org
- **Oratory Co-Op:**
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- **Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD):**
ccd@oratorysga.org
- **Altar servers:**
servers@oratorysga.org
- **Altar and Rosary Society:**
altarandrosary@oratorysga.org
- **Knights of Columbus:**
kofc17355@oratorysga.org
- **Troops of Saint George:**
tsg@oratorysga.org
- **Oratory Schola:**
schola@oratorysga.org
- **Choir:**
choir@oratorysga.org
- **Young Adults:**
youngadults@oratorysga.org
- **Oratory Events:**
events@oratorysga.org
- **Almonry of Ss. Gregory & Augustine:**
almonry@oratorysga.org
- **Online Giving:**
<https://www.osvhub.com/st-louis-latin-mass>

CONTACT US

314-644-2144 / stlouislatinmass.com
7230 Dale Avenue, Richmond Heights, MO 63117

FROM THE RECTOR

Normally, I utilize this part of the bulletin to write about the Sacred Scripture given to us for Holy Mass; however, with the news of the tragic events in Minneapolis at the Church of the Annunciation, it is appropriate to pause and reflect on the state of our world and its culture. This particular tragedy takes on more power and significance because the target was clearly the Catholic Church and Catholic school children. As God's faithful, we do not live in fear of the future, but trust in His divine providence. However, we are called to be aware of the signs of the times and it is a cause of legitimate concern that more Catholics may find themselves victims of violence. How has it come to pass that violence is an answer to divergent views of the world? It is a sad state of affairs that the images of the aftermath of the tragic shootings are all too familiar to us. It is also sad that calls to prayer and recourse to God are rejected publicly contributing to the spiritual death of so many people. This young man, who thought he was a woman, was deeply disturbed and yet no one thought to help him. Instead, his family allowed him to live in this delusion and society taught him that violence was a legitimate response to those with whom you disagree. There are myriads of political/societal responses to this tragedy and some of them might be effective. The only true remedy to the evils of the world is faith in Christ and confidence in the perennial truths of Holy Mother Church. So, I do encourage all of us to pray: for the two innocent children who lost their lives, for the whole parish family of the Church of the Annunciation; for an end to the violent and deadly ideology of transgenderism; for our whole nation and the return to the sovereignty of Christ our King!

UPCOMING EVENTS**Sunday, 7 September:**

- Prime @ 7:20 am
- Confessions @ 7:30 am
- Coffee Hour @ 9:00 am
- Terce @ 9:40 am
- Vespers @ 2:30 pm

Monday, 8 September:

- Server Training @ 4:30 pm
- Girls' Guild @ 4:30 pm
- Vespers @ 6:00 pm
- Compline @ 6:30 pm
- Troops of St. George @ 6:30 pm

Tuesday, 9 September:

- Compline @ 6:30 pm

Wednesday, 10 September:

- Adult Catechesis Class @ 4:00 pm
- Adoration/Confessions @ 5:00 pm
- Vespers @ 6:00 pm
- Compline @ 6:30 pm

Thursday, 11 September:

- Compline @ 6:30 pm
- Knights of Columbus @ 7:00 pm

Friday, 12 September:

- No Events Scheduled

Saturday, 13 September:

- Latin Class @ 9:15 am
- Kenney Baptism @ 10 am
- Vita Communis Birthday Party @ 7:00 pm

PILGRIM VIRGIN MARY STATUE 2025

08/24-08/31 Santschi	08/31-09/07 Kiser
09/07-09/14 Agnew	09/14-09/21 Buyle
09/21-09/28 Leljedal	09/28-10/05 Grizzle
10/05-10/12 Turntine	10/12-10/19 Haulard

10/19-10/26 Kelly	10/26-11/02 Jones
11/02-11/09 Holman	11/09-11/16 Carapella
11/16-11/23 Cook	11/23-11/30 Hayward
11/30-12/07 Joseph	12/07-12/14 Blum
12/14-12/21 Wisniewski	12/21-12/28 Catalano
12/28-01/04 Kenney	01/04-01/11 Raymond
01/11-01/18 Hayes	01/18-01/25 Schuette
01/25-02/01 Filla	02/01-02/08 Petrick

Drop off and pick up the statue in the vestibule (back of church). Place the statue bag on the floor under one of the pews. To join or to quit the schedule contact Sharon Alexander saalexa@sbcglobal.net

MASS INTENTIONS**Monday, 8 September – *The Nativity of the BVM***

6:30 am: Karen Lightfoot
12:15 pm: The Horan Family

Tuesday, 9 September – *St. Gorgonius*

6:30 am: Grace Mueller
12:15 pm: Michael & Margaret Wagoner

Wednesday, 10 September – *St. Nicholas Tolentino*

6:30 am: Jim Griffin (d)
12:15 pm: Helen Bielecki (d)

Thursday, 11 September – *Ss. Protus & Hyacinth*

6:30 am: Enrique Gorostieta (d)
12:15 pm: Evelyn Lane (d)

Friday, 12 September – *Holy Name of Mary*

6:30 am: Kenneth & Therese Dufner (d)
12:15 pm: Julie Weber

Saturday, 13 September – *Saturday of Our Lady*

8:15 am: James Robert Breckenridge (d)

Sunday, 14 September – *Exaltation of the Cross*

6:30 am: Pro Populo
8:00 am: Donna Hagan
10:00 am: Bob Duplantier (d)

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VOCATIONS: PART II

I am grateful for the continued response of our young people to consecrated religious life. In your charity, please pray for Mary Grace DiCarlo of The Community of the Lamb who will be entering her postulancy this coming 14 September 2025, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. What a beautiful day on which to make this generous and loving sacrifice of giving her life to God.

Also, Cameron Toal, who has already spent a year with the Institute of Christ the King, Sovereign Priest, is beginning his studies for the priesthood this coming month in Italy. He appreciates the generosity that the Oratory faithful have already shown him and is grateful for any contributions that can be made. Any donor would simply need to specify that their contributions go towards the seminary fees for Cameron Toal. The men in formation bear the primary responsibility for their financial well-being during their studies. Cameron has provided the following addresses for donations and for correspondence if you would like to write or visit him.

For donations:

Institute of Christ the King
6415 South Woodlawn Avenue
Chicago, IL 60637

Email: info@institute-christ-king.org

For letters:

Cameron Toal
Via di Gricigliano, 52
I-50065 - Sieci (FI)
Italia (International stamps required)

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SISTER MARIA VERONICA

On Tuesday, 5 August 2025, a member of the Oratory of Ss. Gregory and Augustine received her habit and entered the novitiate for the Filiae Laboris Mariae sisters in Fort Scott, Kansas. Erin Losin, now Sr. Maria Veronica, will spend the next two years as a novice for her order before being admitted to profession of vows. Several members of our Oratory were present for her investiture and were privileged to witness this step in her religious life.

Sr. Maria Veronica is one of several young people from the Oratory of Ss. Gregory and Augustine to enter religious life: Br. Peter Mary of the Cross (Colton Marks), Br. Macarius of Jesus Christ Crucified (Donald Mueller) and Nicholas Kalinowski have all entered the Carmelite Hermits in Pennsylvania. Mary Hampton Hayden entered the Carmelite Sisters in Pennsylvania. Cameron Toal has entered the Institute of Christ the King, Sovereign Priest and will begin studies in Italy this coming Fall. It is a great blessing for us to have these people praying for our community.

There are other young people in our community contemplating consecrated religious life and the priesthood. Their generosity in responding to God's call is a reflection of the power of Tradition and a testament to the community that helped to form them. Let us pray for these young people that they will persevere; let us ask the Lord to

raise up more vocations from our Oratory; let us thank God for the blessings bestowed upon us.

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NEW CONFESSION SCHEDULE

The Oratory will return to the availability of Confessions on Sunday mornings (effective 7 September 2025). Confessions will be heard from 7:30 until 9:00 am (approximately) and again from 9:15 am until 10:30 am. This new schedule will allow the priests celebrating the two early Holy Masses to be available for confession. So too, when Msgr. Witt hopefully returns to us, he will be able to assist as well. There will be some Sundays that will need to be adjusted because only two priests will be celebrating Holy Masses that day. Signs will indicate those Sundays as they happen. Please remember that confessions are heard Monday - Friday at 11:00 am; Wednesdays at 5:00 pm; and Saturday mornings at 7:00 am. Finally, please continue to pray for Msgr. Witt as he works toward a full recovery.

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WORD OF GRATITUDE

Thank you to everyone who assisted in the great celebration for the Feast of St. Louis, King of France. With each passing year, the festival becomes a greater part of the patrimony of the Oratory of Ss. Gregory and Augustine. The success of the festival comes from so many volunteers and I will not attempt to list everyone who is involved lest I neglect to mention someone. I do, however, need to express my gratitude to Anna Kalinowski. Anna has worked diligently amongst a number of different groups and peoples to bring together all the various pieces of the festival. She has been particularly helpful to me for which I am grateful. Let us continue to entreat the intercession of our patron, St. Louis for the health of the Archdiocese, the City of St. Louis, and the Oratory of Ss. Gregory and Augustine.

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ADULTS SEEKING THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

We welcome those interested in becoming Catholic. To get started in that process within the OSGA community, please email one of our priests for an introductory meeting. Their contacts are available in the bulletin. After this, candidates for Initiation at the Oratory will be directed to complete a registration form with our Administrator.

Catechism classes are held in the St Joseph Room (rectory basement) generally on a bi-monthly basis, the second and fourth Wednesdays from 4-5PM.

The content surrounds a set of topics central to Catholic teaching, as set forth by Msgr. Morris. Deacon Pieper moderates most meetings through a questions and answer format and hopes to promote sincere dialogue with the candidates regarding those topics and/or related questions. The intent is to communicate Christ and His Church. Sacraments are offered on an individual basis, on a rolling schedule throughout the year, after mutual discernment by the candidate, our deacon and priests.

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4TH ANNUAL CATHOLIC ART FESTIVAL

13 September from 10 AM - 4 PM at Epiphany of Our Lord Parish Field. The Catholic Art Festival- hosted by Catholic Artist Network - is an annual event for creatives and art

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lovers to come together to support local Catholic artists and enjoy the beauty God inspires. It is free to attend and hosts many fine art vendors selling their work, live performances throughout the day from local acts, activities for children in the Kid's Corner, prayer opportunities throughout the day, food and drinks and more! For more information, visit:

catholicartfest.com."

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JOB OPENING: ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT



Saint Francis de Sales Oratory is currently looking to hire a part-time Administrative Assistant (32 hours/week). Qualified candidates MUST have previous office/admin experience. For more info on

the position and how to apply, please call 314-884-2368 and ask for Mike.

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THE MARIAN CATECHIST APOSTOLATE HOME STUDY COURSE

Pope John Paul II asked St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta to catechize the Missionaries of Charity and prepare them to not only care for the poor but also to evangelize them. Mother Teresa depended on Servant of God Father John Hardon, S.J. to prepare a program for the Sisters that eventually became the Marian Catechist Apostolate home study course. Cardinal Burke assumed leadership of the Apostolate at Fr. Hardon's request. The mission of the Marian Catechist Apostolate is to form catechists doctrinally and spiritually for the teaching of the Catholic Faith. This four-part home study course is both challenging and rewarding. The course was designed to be done independently, but study groups are available. Information on the Marian Catechist Apostolate is available in the front vestibule or at <https://mariancatechist.com/>. Please contact Pam Fichter for more information or to join a local study group at pamf319@gmail.com.

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SCHOOL OF MARY

You are invited to take part in a unique educational opportunity offered by the Filiae Laboris Mariae!

Coming Soon! This fall the Sisters will be teaching more online classes. See below or email them SchoolofMarywithFLM@gmail.com for more information. More information can also be found on their website and to register for classes: <https://www.schoolofmaryflm.org/>.

Moral Theology: A course for adults ages 18+ on Thursdays from 7:00-8:00 pm.

The Sacraments: A course for youth ages 11-14 on Wednesdays from 3:30-4:15 pm.

The Four Last Things: A course for youth ages 15-18 on Tuesdays from 3:30-4:15 pm.

Taking these classes is a great way to learn, to meet other like-minded Catholics, and to support the Sisters! Registration is now open! Note for high school students / minors: Please provide parent contact information (i.e. email address) when registering.

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RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

For those in our community who are new to the Traditional Latin Mass, when you approach the altar rail for holy

communion it is the custom to begin filling in the altar rail at the far right near St. Joseph's altar and fill in the rail until its end at the Marian altar. This practice is not impacted by which side of the Church you happen to be seated. You are allowed, and encouraged, to switch sides in order to keep the communion line moving. This is particularly important when there are two sacred ministers distributing Holy Communion. So too, do not overly delay approaching the rail waiting for others to return to their pews. If everyone moves with attention to what is happening, there should be a flow of movement between those departing the altar rail and those approaching the altar rail. Also, for daily Holy Mass: please kneel at the rail only where the houseling cloth has been prepared for communion. Please keep in mind that we should not keep the Lord waiting but moving with grace and deliberation to the altar rail to receive our Eucharistic Lord.

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THE COMMUNION RAIL

There have been several incidents where the faithful have fallen from the communion rail after receiving Holy Communion. The severity of the injuries has varied, but sadly this has occurred far too often. I would ask everyone to be attentive to the step up AND down at the communion rail. Please be aware of those with any mobility issues and assist them if no ushers are present. If you bring someone new to the Oratory for Holy Mass, please remind them of the step at the communion rail or if you see someone struggling, please assist them. If the community is more cognizant of this at the time of communion it is hoped that the accidents can cease. Please pray for those who have fallen, especially for a swift recovery from their injuries.

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MISSIONARY SISTERS of ST PETER CLAVER



The Board of the Missionary Sisters of St. Peter Claver invites you to attend the "All Children of One Father" Annual Dinner Auction on Saturday, 20 September @ 6:00 pm at the Hilton St. Louis Frontenac. The annual dinner auction will benefit 2025 Mission Projects. Deadline to register is 13 September.

REGISTER TODAY at <http://SSPC25.givesmart.com>.

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NEW FAMILIES for AUGUST (alphabetical order)

A warm welcome to our new parishioners!

- The Campbell Family ~ Ryan & Gigi, Beau, and Jamie
- Monica-Elese Daos
- The Henry Family ~ Carter & Grace, and William
- The Higa Family ~ Nicholas & Sofia, Sebastian, Cassian, Damian, Alphonsus, and Francis
- Darin Kruzich
- Greta VanDamme

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WHAT ARE STOLE FEES?

It is customary in the Catholic Church for the provision of the clergy to offer "stole fees," at baptisms, weddings, funerals, or the blessing of homes. These stipends form a part of the compensation for the clergy. Most priests don't want to sound greedy or ungrateful, so stole fees are not often mentioned or taught about, but because people are not

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aware of them, the faithful usually find it helpful to learn that they do exist (and that the priests are grateful for your generosity!).

These fees are *not* obligatory but are given as a sign of appreciation and support for the clergy's work. The Catholic Church emphasizes that these fees should not be seen as payment for sacraments, which are free gifts of God. The clergy at the Oratory are particularly keen to make clear that no one who asks for a sacrament will ever be denied for lack of a stole fee.

In our archdiocese, there are suggested amounts that people usually give, and that information will be shared with you by the office when the event is scheduled. Thank you!

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JUBILEE YEAR INFORMATION

The Jubilee Year of 2025, (24 December 2024 through 6 January 2026), offers the faithful many opportunities to obtain the Jubilee Indulgence. Local designated pilgrimage sites are as follows: The Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis (New Cathedral), The Basilica of St. Louis, King of France (Old Cathedral), Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters (St. Louis), The Carmel of St. Joseph (St. Louis), St. Mary's of the Barrens National Shrine of the Miraculous Medal (Perryville), Monastery of St. Clare (St. Louis), Passionist Nuns of St. Louis (Ellisville), Immaculate Heart of Mary (New Melle), Immaculate Conception (Union). For more information about the Jubilee Year and how to receive an indulgence, please see the flyers on the bulletin board in the church vestibule or visit: <https://www.archstl.org/2025jubileeyear/>

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PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

In your charity, please pray for the following members of the Oratory who are ill: Mary Jane Bolte; Petra Felicity Cheaney,

daughter of Michael & Jaime; Jeanmarie DeCoster; Donna Hagan; Shane Kiser, husband of Maggie Kiser; Dotty Kuhlmann, mother of Donna Mueller; Mary McMahan; Donna Mueller; Michael Norfleet, son of Marsha Norfleet; Elizabeth Ryan; Mary Joseph Schenk, daughter of Nicholas & Elaine; Patrick Schneider; Sylvester Soldinie; Sheila Ten Eyck; Lara Trudell, daughter of Sharon and Jim Alexander; Renee Weidner; and Msgr. Witt.

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PRAYERS FOR THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

- Sherree Conoyer, niece of Mary Schuette
- Marsha Dames, niece of Mary Schuette
- Theresa Hernandez, sister of Mary Schuette

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USHERS' SCHEDULE

Sunday, 7 September

6:30 am Bill Saccente*, Evan Adair

8:00 am Terry Conway*, Sam Ashlock, Ken Catalano, Greg Rheinheimer

10:00 am Mark Scheer*, Robert Morgan, Jesse Hermann, Charlie Raymond

Sunday, 14 September

6:30 am Brayden Bauman*, Chris Bauman

8:00 am Sam Ashlock*, Greg Rheinheimer, Michael Nelson, Jeff Martin

10:00 am Robert Morgan*, Jesse Hermann, Charlie Raymond, Patrick Kelly

Sunday, 21 September

6:30 am Jim Alexander*, Ben Schubert

8:00 am Greg Rheinheimer*, Michael Nelson, Jeff Martin, Kenny Buyle

10:00 am Jesse Hermann*, Charlie Raymond, Patrick Kelly, John Simmons

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+ Altar Server Schedule: September 2025 +

Date	Time	MC at High Mass / Acolyte at Low Mass	Thurifer	Acolyte 1	Acolyte 2
7 September 2025	6:30	Ben Schubert			
	8:00	Matthew Rheinheimer			
	10:00	Salvatore Saccente	Peter Blum	Anthony Kelly	Leo Grizzle
14 September 2025	6:30	Michael Norfleet			
	8:00	Joseph Blum			
	10:00	Michael Turntine	Matthew Rheinheimer	Kolbe Grizzle	Elijah Garvey
21 September 2025	6:30	Jack Ryan			
	8:00	Leo Grizzle			
	10:00	Philip Petrick	Joseph Noble	Charles Fowler	Silas Buyle

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WELLSPRING OF TRADITION: DEUS IN ADJUTORIUM MEUM INTENDE

"*Deus, in adjutorium meum intende: Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina,*" which is the first verse of Psalm 69, is the opening prayer of every single Divine Office in the Breviary (a few exceptions, I know). You also hear it regularly before blessings and in litanies.

In the beginning of his rule, St Benedict, instructs the monks that whatever good work they undertake, they should begin with a prayer asking God to perfect it. And what is Holy Mass, the keeping of the Divine Office, and the blessings and litanies of the Church if not our highest and best work? Through them, we participate in the incarnational life of Christ himself, as evidenced by the fact that the prayer is often accompanied by making a sign of the Cross. We must never forget that our salvation is by grace, and all our efforts are but halting attempts at goodness, never perfect and never meriting Heaven on their own. It is only when we combine our good works with the perfect work of the Cross that they attain meritorious effect.

This is why, in beginning the work of prayer, we begin by asking God to rescue us, to come to our help, and to do so quickly. We desperately need Christ to exercise his priestly ministry in our midst.

When monks in the western Church took up the habit of beginning the Office with the *Deus, in adiutorium meum intende*, they were picking up on a growing spiritual discipline of what we might call “continuous prayer,” which spread under the influence of St. John Cassian who, as a young man, spent many years in Egypt with the desert fathers. At that time in the early Church, many men would disappear into the deserts of Egypt to practice solitary prayer and penance. They disciplined themselves to remain constantly in the presence of God, to pray always.

Cassian picked up on this and realized that, if we are to pray well and consistently, we must pray with discipline. We need a plan - *how* to pray, *what* to pray, and *when* to pray. We often over-complicate this, perhaps thinking that structured, formal prayer is only for monastics and clergy, or that we need emotional touchstones to keep us motivated, or a stream of new prayers, complicated prayers, something different because we know that the way we’ve prayed in the past is up-and-down at best. Our prayer hasn’t been perfected and we know this, so we go searching for a fix. But the fix is not in novel modes of prayer but, rather, staying faithful to the prayer of the Church and very intentionally and regularly inviting Christ to perfect the prayer in us.

In fact, the plan for a good prayer life is quite simple. Structure your day so as to make it a regular, predictable part of it so it fits in naturally and easily. It isn’t an option to choose when or where to pray – we simply do it at the appointed time, faithfully. The Divine Office is not just for monks. It’s for the Church. The rosary, daily Mass, meditating on the Scriptures, spiritual reading, some variation of these forms of prayer ought to be a regular, daily part of your spiritual life. We are reminded of this by the constant presence of the *Deus, in adiutorium meum intende*. We are ever-throwing ourselves on God’s mercy, ever-mindful that our Savior has rescued us.

St. John Cassian explains the logic behind the simplicity, teaching that, in prayer, we are restricting ourselves to poverty. In the case of the *Deus, in adiutorium meum intende*, it’s to the poverty of the Psalm verse through which distractions fall away and we arrive into the living presence of Our Lord’s Passion and Resurrection. We cast off all novel techniques and the desire for variety and entertainment so as to drill down to the core of the interior life.

The technique is simple, remain in the divine presence in such a way that Christ comes alongside you and prays in you. That’s the difficulty, the ability to remain, to make holy every moment, to be attentive to the presence of Christ. We’re not good at that. The discipline wears on us. Our attention wanders. We prefer spiritual candy. But the Church doesn’t offer an easy path. She offers the narrow path. She offers the bruised and bloody Christ at the side of the road, half-dead and voluntarily descended from his throne. She offers us the chance to pause by his side and comfort him, to walk with him, and so continue our journey. This is the simple demand of love and the logic of transfiguration. Every day, Christ is with us. Every day, we consecrate our time to Him. Every day, we are in need of rescue.

The man assisted by the Good Samaritan is both Christ and us as we take on the image of Christ. Perhaps the prayer on his lips, lying in need of rescue, is “Lord make haste to help me.”

Cassian says that the poverty of focusing on Christ through continuous prayer seems to be a descending path (notice that the bloodied traveler in the Good Samaritan parable is descending down the road from Jerusalem, down from the temple), in that poverty, we are actually ascending. He references Psalm 103 and how we are like stags, like deer climbing to exalted and sacred mysteries.

I want to linger here briefly on this theological insight of this, because it’s written all over the Scriptures and the lives of the saints. We can sum it up in the Magnificat, “The humble shall be lifted.” The rejection of spiritual baubles and distractions and comfort, this inward poverty of the repetition we find in the *Deus, in adiutorium meum intende*, it isn’t a rejection of the vast and varied goodness of life and created goods. It isn’t a descent into a mystical mantra that we repeat as a sort of puritanical rejection of everything else. It isn’t a way of saying that prayer cannot be imaginative. In fact, Holy Mass and the Divine Office contain a plenitude of poetic images. The incense, bells, vestments, the physicality of the Blessed Sacrament, the chant, the organ, the artwork, it’s all a searching out of God through the imagination, through the reflected goodness of creation.

What’s happening in repeated, focused, and impoverishing prayers is not a rejection but, rather, an embrace of the imagination. Cassian is clear about this. Church tradition is clear about this (and I worry we’ve forgotten it). The spiritual stag, or the pilgrim up the Holy Mountain to Heaven, moves upwards *in* and *through* the images. We press on to what Cassian calls the “multiformem scientiam dei/ manifold knowledge of God.” Spiritual ascent is not freedom from words or images, or a mystical rejection of speculative theology and dogma but, rather, moving through them into the simple love of God, the eternal reality in which this created reality participates. The impoverishment is learning that God alone is all we need. In that impoverishment we receive *everything*.

As our prayers are joined to Christ, we begin to pray with and through His incarnated divinity, His divine humanity, and His prayer becomes our prayer. This is the prayer that seeks out nothing less than the redemption of the cosmos, reaching forward into the fullness of revelation at the end of time and embodying it here and now. Restore us to life, O Lord, that we may humbly participate in your eternal mystery. ~ The Rev. Michael Rennie

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Our Lady of Walsingham, intercede for us who have recourse to thee!

Ss. Gregory and Augustine, pray for us!

Perfect Love
DOULA SERVICES
Amanda Antony, Doula
doulaperfectlovedoula.com
(903) 348-6205
"Perfect love casts out fear."
1 John 4:18

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Alex Filla
Premier Real Estate Agent | Oratory Member
afilla@cbphomes.com
Office: 636-231-3122 • Cell: 636-390-2121

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St. Veronica, Pray for us. Immaculate Heart of Mary, Pray for us.
Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Have Mercy on us.

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