



MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

FALL 2008

It is not hard to find a person who **thinks that he is in the right, a person who believes he stands in the light**, grateful for all the illumination he has received, given that so many stand in darkness. That is practically any person at all.

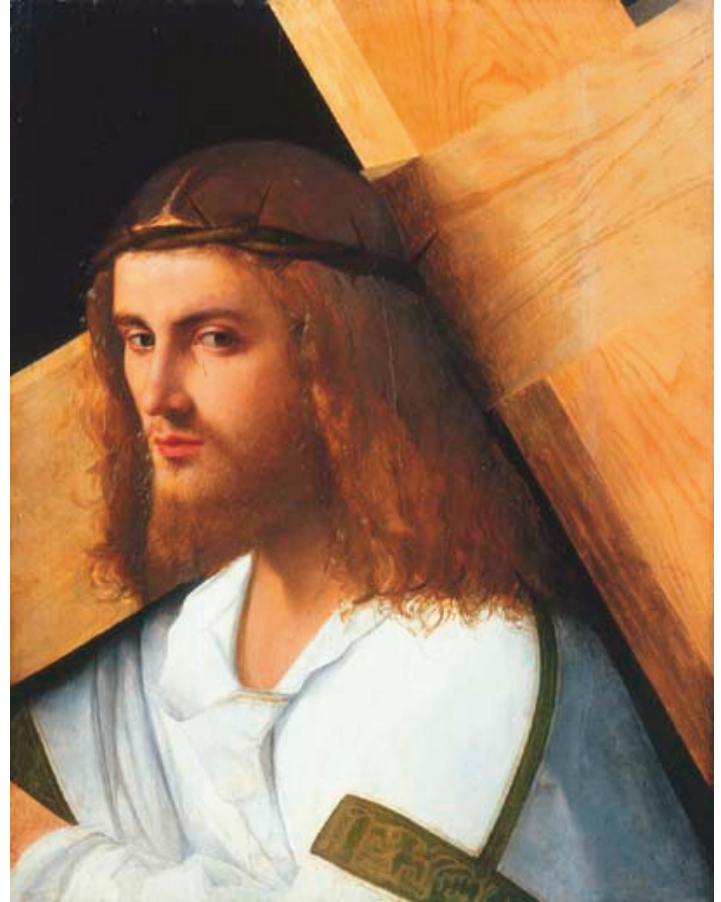
It is easy to learn what Christians are grateful for. They are grateful to know the Lord, and for a great deal more of the light they are so conscious of possessing: they are grateful to know about objective truth, justification by faith, the importance of liturgy, the role of the sacraments, celibate clergy, same-sex marriage, women preachers, the power of free-form prayer, the power of fixed-form prayer, the place of Mary, religious superstition, the correct interpretation of ... (insert chapter and verse), idolatry, sin, salvation – history shows that you can extend this sequence *ad infinitum*. There is no tone of mockery in that sentence; I have beliefs about every one of those things and I cannot unbelieve my beliefs. It is no accident that ‘unbelieve’ is not a word in any known language.

But this belief is not the same kind of thing as my belief in God. My knowledge of the presence of the Lord is knowledge for which the world can offer no conceivable counter-evidence.

This summer one of my brothers accidentally locked an old trunk we had dragged from a closet and were preparing to use. “I’ve locked the trunk!” We couldn’t open it; everyone tried; we believed him. Later in the day someone pushed the trunk aside, standing it on end: it instantly popped open – counter-evidence for the claim, “The trunk is locked”. We were wrong. And now ask yourself: what conceivable counter-evidence is there for a Christian’s belief in God?

What would it take for you to say, ‘We were wrong’ about Jesus? The belief in Christ, the knowledge that God exists: this is in a very special class of ‘belief’. Atheists drop their jaws at all ‘unfalsifiable’ belief but the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein didn’t: he called it the bedrock of the way people live – “we always eventually have to reach some firm ground” and “a picture which is at the root of all our thinking is to be respected and not treated as a superstition.” Nothing but my own sin can take Christ from me, and sin is not evidence. But a lot of the knowledge Christians are grateful for is not in that class, or, if I may say so, anywhere near it.

These are beliefs for which counter-evidence *can* be conceived (a passage of Scripture, say, that challenges my view), beliefs for which I will want to offer some evidence – and the better the evidence I think I have, the closer I will come to shaking my head at the poor folks standing in total darkness.



If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. LUKE 9:23

Giovanni Bellini. 1505–10. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston

Shift, now, to one of the true blessings of summer: *vacation*. Most highly recommended. Get out of your house in every way possible! Vacate your dwelling physical and mental, so that you can get a sidelong look at where you are living. Occasionally this summer I felt nausea at all that furniture of knowledge in my house. What brought the nausea on, one day, were the words of an Orthodox monk, Fr. Seraphim Rose, on what he called “correctness disease.” People could “save their souls better,” he said, “by being a little ‘incorrect’ but humbler.” Suddenly I liked his house better than mine.

I felt the nausea again one Sunday when I heard the Gospel: the parable Jesus told **“to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt.”** What does the Pharisee in Luke 18 say? **“God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers.”** Couldn’t he add, ‘I thank You that I stand in the light’ –

in fact, isn't that *just what he is saying*: that **he knows** just what it takes? The things he is talking about are all good (honesty, justice); well, truth is good: why not thank God that he has that, too – is right about faith, idolatry, the Law, adultery, homosexuality? Jesus contrasts that man with the publican who would not even **“lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”** What sins was he counting? Might he have said, ‘a sinner in the misuse of my frail mind – God be merciful to a man who thinks he knows, a poor believer of beliefs!’?

How right are we, when we think this or that? Aquinas said, **“A small error at the outset can lead to great errors in the final conclusions.”** How sure are we about all the many unconscious steps we have taken to get to this conclusion or that? Do we have the truth? When Paul says, **“Knowledge makes arrogant”** (1 Cor 8) he is talking about **all the trouble we have with knowledge**, which is plenty.

Jesus clearly called us to believe many things (about living by bread alone, tempting the Lord, changing the Law, sinning in thought, the speck in another's eye) but He did not say, ‘Salvation hinges on what you believe.’ Or, ‘The way, the truth, and the life are painstakingly laid out for you in this theology I have crafted,’ since He wrote nothing down. He came. He gave us models to follow. He said, **“Follow me.”** He said, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”** The corrective to our trouble with knowledge is Christ Himself, who corrects, but never argues, disputes, wrangles.

While revising a lecture on Socrates it occurred to me that no university education ever leaves Socrates out, but Socrates always goes right over every head – the lecturer's first. (You never stop relearning the hard lessons, so it is very good to start.) Generally we don't understand what Socrates means by ‘philosophy’, the *love of wisdom*, and so miss one of the greatest lessons of Western thought. **Socrates loves wisdom.** No person *has what he loves*. Whatever any person loves is not his to possess: it is eternally beyond him. **Socrates basks in the light that he does not have.** He too corrects but never argues.

We humans, Christian and otherwise, have a **deep lesson to learn about the mind.** **“If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know.”** (1 Cor 8) We could learn it from our own tradition: from Christ, from Socrates, from the Orthodox monks who tell each other, “Brother, be careful not to trust yourself and your own thoughts, but repeat that wise saying, ‘Cursed be your thoughts and the knowledge you create’.”

These monks *know* something. Ironic, isn't it? They *know something important* about the use of the mind of man, and we must *understand* their warning. Do you hear the irony? Understand *with the mind*. We must *use the very mind* that we are just now telling ourselves we *must not trust*. Does a creature like that not have to throw itself helplessly on the mercy of God?

Look to Christ. A painting by Giovanni Bellini shows us what model He gave us for the use of the mind. It is not the model of “super-correctness,” contradiction, disdain. Christ calls us to **follow the truth**, not to own it.

We are made for the light but when we own it we are deluded, and, if deluded, then blind – in the dark. Believe what you believe, follow the light that is in your mind, but do you *really see*? Are you *certain*? Sure that you have *made no mistake*? If we are backed up from here to Friday with facts, if we **“speak with the tongues of angels,”** no less, but **“have not charity,”** then we are just **“sounding brass”** (1 Cor 13), makers of noise without knowledge.

It is a great thing to be starting another academic year because in this world of making and doing, of ‘implementing our solutions’, there is no better oasis than the place that divests us of arrogance and helps us to see the light that is not our own.

Edward Tingley | Dean

THE CLASS OF 2009

This year we welcome seven students from Canada and the United States, though this year, exceptionally, most are from this region. With other applicants under consideration, **thus far our 12th Augustine College class is:**

Karen Ainsley, Sanford, North Carolina
Sarah Austin, Vancouver, British Columbia
Zach Candy, Ashton, Ontario
Joel Lendore, Ottawa, Ontario
Samantha Kiser, Little Rock, Arkansas
Kyle Podruzny, Carleton Place, Ontario
David Wijsman, Mountain, Ontario

We welcome each one to this College. The fall term begins with **Commencement** on **Sunday, September 7th, 2 pm**, at All Saints' Anglican Church (behind the College). The address – entitled **“Wisdom, Self-discipline, and Virtue”** – will be delivered by the President of the College, **Dr. John Patrick**. We welcome all friends of the College as well as any who might wish to learn more about us to attend and join us afterward for refreshments at the College.

COMING EVENTS

The **Corn Roast**, a country get-together for students, faculty, and friends of Augustine College, will take place **Saturday, September 13th**, once again at the home of the **Hacketts**, parents of alumnus **Leah Hackett Smith** (1998). We are again beholden to and grateful to the Hackett family for their generosity.

The **Annual General Meeting** will take place at the College **Thursday, September 25th, 7 pm**. Supporters and others interested in what we do are welcome to attend.

Our Twelfth Annual **Hymn Sing** is planned for **Saturday, October 4th, 7:30 pm**, in the contemplative and

beautiful setting of St. Barnabas' Church (Kent and James). This year's hymns and meditations follow the theme "Songs of the Saints." In an evening of worship, faculty, staff, and students of the College will reflect on the lives of these exemplary followers of Christ.

Are you or someone you know heading off to college next year? **Student-for-a-Day** takes place **Saturday, November 29th**. Come sit in on classes; lunch will be provided. The atmosphere is relaxed and our students and faculty are friendly. See the website for further details.

In the Steps of St. Paul. Plans are underway for a two-week trip through Greece and Turkey in early June, 2009, conducted by **Prof. Ed Bloedow**. The tour will include all the major sites in Paul's three Missionary Journeys, beginning at Antioch and ending in Corinth. Whether this plan will go ahead will depend upon your response. For more information please visit the website and let us know of your interest.

WESTON LECTURE

Coming up in November, 2008, is the annual **Weston Lecture**, to be delivered this year by **Michael Heller**, winner of the 2008 **Templeton Prize**. Fully titled the Templeton Prize for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries about Spiritual Realities, the prize has been awarded since 1973 to what its founder, Sir John Templeton, called "entrepreneurs of the spirit" – living persons who have made an exceptional contribution to the affirmation of those aspects of human experience that, even in an age of rapid scientific advance, remain beyond the reach of scientific explanation. The 2008 prize has been awarded to Dr. Heller in recognition of his strikingly original research into the origin of the universe.

Once upon a time there was a bang, a very BIG bang ... – that is the way many people tell the story, but was this the true beginning of the universe? What does the latest scientific research tell us about longstanding philosophical and theological views on the origin of things? Upon receipt of the prize, Dr. Heller reiterated his belief that the oft-described "two worlds" of religion and science are in no way at odds: without the meaning afforded by religion, "science would be meaningless."

Dr. Heller, Professor in the Faculty of Philosophy at the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Cracow, is a cosmologist and Catholic priest who for more than forty years has developed the provocative ideas that he will present in his Weston Lecture, titled, "**Did It Start with a Bang? Science, Religion, and the Creation of the Universe.**"

In the past the Weston Lecture has presented our students and members of the public with a brilliant example of how faith and reason may be united in mutually strengthening way, a tradition inaugurated through the generous support of George Weston Limited. This year's lecture continues in that tradition. For date, time, and location, please check the website.



Michal Heller, winner of the 2008 Templeton Prize, for "progress in humanity's efforts to comprehend the many and diverse manifestations of the Divine"

2007/08 HIGHLIGHTS

The year closed with the **11th Graduation Ceremony and Dinner** on **April 25th**, held this year at St. Barnabas Church. The **Valedictory Address** was delivered by **Jennifer Holmes** and the **Graduation Address**, entitled "What Our Students Know and Don't Know," by **Edward Tingley**. This year there were two recipients of the **Andrew J.B. Sterling Award**, recognizing a student who has made an exemplary contribution to the College, both academically and socially: congratulations to **Starr Driedger** and **Jennifer Holmes**.

This year's Augustine College **Summer Conference** (Module VII in our **Roots of Modern Medicine** series), took place **June 1–7** on the topic, **Technology and Life**, our first conference on developments in the 20th century. It was well attended by 28 participants.

FACULTY & PROGRAMME NEWS

This year the faculty continues unchanged. We are pleased to report that **Mark Whittall**, who left us in 2007 to complete studies for the ministry, was ordained as a deacon in the Anglican Church of Canada on May 1st. He is the new pastor of the parish of Huntley and will be ordained as a priest on **December 4th, 2008**, at Christ Church Cathedral in Ottawa.

ADMINISTRATION NEWS

Among the exciting initiatives in our second decade of operations is the appointment as Communications Officer of **Jonathan Randoy** (2008), who, having gone through the programme himself, well knows the need that this College serves. His appointment will give us a more active involvement in communicating what the College has to offer both to prospective students and to the wider community.

Our Resident Advisor for the past three years, **Emily Martin**, has baked her last batch of biscotti for us. She moves on to new things, though continues as leader of the winter-term Book of the Semester. Emily repeatedly managed events of mammoth proportions with a characteristic and admirable calm. That challenge now passes to **Janice Pringle** (2004), who has served on the Members' Committee as an Alumni Representative since 2007.

AFAC

The **American Friends of Augustine College**, now a registered charity in the United States, held its first meeting in Ottawa on June 1st and over the summer has added to its membership two AC alumni: **Jennifer Holmes** (2008) and **Roger Revell** (2006). We are delighted at the representation of alumni on the Board and that these individuals have agreed to serve. This organization was founded in 2007 to assist in the enrolment of us students and to provide material support for Augustine College. For more on AFAC and how Americans might assist it, consult its website at **amfriendsaugustine.org**.

ALUMNI NEWS

Tim Hanna (2000) will marry Jeanette Suurdt on September 27, 2008, in Frankford, Ontario.

Caleb Cohoe (2002) writes, "I graduated from Thomas Aquinas College in 2006 and am entering third-year Classical Philosophy at Princeton University. I married the lovely Samantha McCall, a fellow graduate of Thomas Aquinas, in May 2007 and our son Isaac Matthew Cohoe was born on March 8 this year! We're enjoying life in Princeton and watching Isaac grow."

Sam McLoughlin (2003) writes, "Come September I am going to Regent College in Vancouver to do a Master's in Christian Studies. I am also trying to write a book about my experience as a Christian doing Philosophy at a secular university. After graduating in Philosophy at the University of Western Ontario I spent time travelling the world with my brother – we trekked to Mt. Everest Base Camp in Nepal and spent about a month in Europe. My ambition is to carve out a niche teaching either Philosophy or Christian Apologetics to a post-modern, pop-culture-obsessed generation."

Joshua and Janiece Loyd (2004) have travelled to

Vietnam to adopt 10-month-old Nathan.

Daniel Ragonesi (2004) will marry Christina Berdos on August 16th, 2008, in Morristown, N.J. "After our wedding we will be moving to Newark, Delaware, where I will be entering a doctoral program in mechanical engineering at the University of Delaware, and where Christina will be working as a research assistant in physical therapy."

Joy Abbott (2005) writes, "I have had some interesting years since leaving Augustine, working with my dad in his landscaping company (where I was grilled on the Latin names of plants – learning Latin really helped, since the names were generally descriptions of the plant), working at a public library, and modelling in a few fashion shows (it never occurred to me that I could do this but it was a very positive experience and I came out with a new sense of self confidence). I have found that the things I learned at Augustine come back to me at the oddest times! My brother asked me to translate 'For God, Family, and Country' into Latin for his tattoo and I was able to do it after a little thought. I am surprised at how much I remember from class at Augustine."

Luke Patient (2006) was married to Emily Napier July 25th, 2008, in Tucson, Arizona. "Emily and I plan to move to Philadelphia where I will commence studies at the University of Pennsylvania, pursuing a year-long post-baccalaureate certificate program in Classics – Latin and Greek."

Roger Revell (2006) writes, "A bit of news: I'll be moving to England in September to begin a Degree in Theology at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. *Would be glad to host any Augustine folks who happen to be in that area in the next few years!*"

SUPPORT

Last year we operated with a surplus thanks to a good enrolment and wonderful contributions from our donors. We express our ongoing gratitude to the Spaenaur corporation and all our individual supporters for their generous gifts. This year's lower enrolment poses a financial challenge but we are confident that the Lord will provide, as He has always done.

Would you like to share in this exciting ministry? Please let us know. There are many ways to lend a hand.

AUGUSTINE COLLEGE

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