

Lyceum 108, August 28, 2025 – – a forum to Think, Discuss, Share, and Learn from one another. Your input is welcomed - Iron sharpens iron.

Neighborhood “The 1826, in Connecticut, a farmer named Josiah Holbrook started a school for ‘the general diffusion of knowledge and raising the moral and intellectual taste’ of Americans. In those days, the opportunities for higher education were limited to those venerable old universities that had long served the upper crust. Holbrook’s vision was to make learning – practical, liberal, and humane – available to working people of all kinds. He named his school the Lyceum, after the garden where Aristotle once taught his students philosophy.... We need to go deeper than the superficial fights that characterize public life. We need to return to the first principles and meet each other there as human beings.”– Nathan Beacom, Plough Magazine, Autumn 2023, p. 9.

I am dedicating this Lyceum in memory of my friend and Norbertine classmate who passed away on August 21, 2025. How fitting that on this feast day of St. Augustine, August 28, whose rule the Norbertines breathe, live, and pray. Andrew will be received at the Abbey Church on this feast of St. Augustine at the Vespers for the dead Thursday evening, Aug. 28. Funeral Mass (livestreamed) is at 10 am CST, Friday, August 29. It will be livestreamed on Daylesford's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

No doubt, given Andrew’s bubbly personality, he is taking heaven by storm and having a theological conversation with St. Augustine.

The following is an edited biographical summary of his life and his amazing contributions to study and practice of liturgical studies nationally and globally.

“Andrew Dominic Ciferni, O. Praem. was born in Philadelphia, PA on February 3, 1942, the oldest of four sons of Amelia and Amedeo Ciferni. He was named Dominic at Baptism, the name of his paternal grandfather. Father Andrew attended Saint Edmond's Elementary School, staffed by the IHM Sisters. Andrew served Mass at Saint Edmond's Parish and loved both the liturgy of the church and his family's roots and rituals from the Abruzzi region of Italy.

Father Andrew attended Bishop Neumann High School in South Philadelphia where he came to know the Norbertines who staffed the school. One week after his graduation from high school in 1959 he attended the dedication of the new Saint Norbert Abbey in De Pere, Wisconsin. He received the white Norbertine habit at Daylesford Priory on August 28, 1959. From 1961 to 1965 he lived at St. Norbert Abbey in De Pere and studied at St. Norbert College, graduating in 1965.

Though his accomplishments in his life as a Norbertine of Daylesford Abbey are impressive and world renowned, he enjoyed being surrounded by the beauties of the earth most associated with his Italian American heritage and humble upbringing. Most notably, Andrew loved all things Italian: good wine, fine art, and specialties to delight his Italian pallet. He loved classical music, was an avid reader of historical, religious, and architectural literature with an endless, unquenchable intellectual curiosity.

And of course, he loved everything associated with the Fightin' Irish of the University of Notre Dame.

During the last three years Father Andrew has been treated for cancer. In this Jubilee Year of Hope Father Andrew was a model of Saint Paul's word in Romans 12:12 - "Rejoice in Hope, Endure in Affliction, Persevere in Prayer." If in life, Andrew was a force to be reckoned with as a liturgist extraordinaire, as he faced death, he was the epitome of grace, serenity and surrender to his caretakers and especially to the will of the God he loved and praised his whole religious life. Inspired by Pope Francis' own heroic suffering, Father Andrew died on August 21, 2025, knowing with Pope Francis that "Hope does not disappoint" (Romans 5:5)."

Here are selected writings of St. Augustine that I am sure Andrew would be delighted to revisit. Resource: Augustine of Hippo, selected writings, Translation and Introduction by Mary Clark, preface by Goulven Madec, Paulist Press, New York, 1984.

"Confessions. "- Late have I loved you, O Beauty, so ancient and so new, late have I loved you! And behold, you were within me, and I was outside, and there I sought you, and in my deformity, I rushed headlong into the well-formed things that you have made. You were with me, and I was not with you. Those outer beauties held me far from you, yet if they had not been in you, they would not have existed at all. You called and cried out to me and broke open my deafness, you shone forth upon me and you scattered my blindness. You breathed fragrance, and I drew my breath, and I now pant for you: I tasted, and I hunger and thirst; you touched me, and I burned for Your peace." -Confessions of Augustine of Hippo, selected writings, p. 144,

"On seeing God." – "But let this suffice, and when you consider it...that a clean and pure heart ought to prepare you, with His help, to see God." -Selected writings, P. 403.

"On the Presence of God." – "Hence God, who is present everywhere and wholly present everywhere, does not dwell everywhere but only in His temple, to which by His grace He is kind and gracious, but in His indwelling, he is received more fully by some, less by others. "Selected writings, p. 424.

“The Rule of St. Augustine.” “First and foremost, my very dear Brothers, you are to love God, and then your neighbor, because these are the chief comments give to us.

- 1. Mutual Love: Expressed in the Community of Goods and in Humility; 2. Community Prayer; 3. Community and Care of the Body; 4. Community Responsibility in Good and Evil; 5. Service of One Another; 6. Unanimity and Forgiveness; 7. Love in Authority and Obedience; and 8. Observance of the Rule” – Selected writings, pp. 485-493.”**

“The City of God.” “What are kingdoms without justice? They are just gangs of bandits.” -equality. The Internet.

“On the Trinity.” “There is in this Trinity an absolute equality. The Father is not greater in divinity than the Son, nor together are the Father and the Song greater than the Holy Spirit; nor is any single Person of the three anything less than the Trinity itself.” – p. 113.

[Vatican](#)

A guide to Pope Leo XIV's 'Augustinianism'

[Mike Aquilina](#)

May 19, 2025 •

“St. Augustine,” by Philippe de Champaigne, 1602-1674, French. (Wikimedia Commons)

“Augustinian” is the word most often used to describe the mind of Pope Leo XIV. He used it himself [in his first papal blessing](#) on May 8: “I am an Augustinian, a son of St. Augustine.”

There are two senses to the word, and he fulfills both.

In one sense it means that he is a member of the Order of St. Augustine (OSA) — [the Augustinians](#).

In a second sense, however, “Augustinian” denotes a distinctive approach to spirituality and theology. It means that the pontiff lives according to the principles of St. Augustine of Hippo, a North African who lived in the fourth and fifth centuries. More than a millennium-and-a-half after his death, he remains one of the most influential thinkers in all human history.

From Leo's public statements — both before and after assuming the papacy — he is clearly an Augustinian in both senses.

As Robert Prevost, he professed his first vows in the Augustinian order in 1978 and solemn vows in 1981.

As Leo he quoted Augustine in his first public address, and he took [a line of Augustine's as his motto](#) — the key to understanding his pontificate. -Internet.

May Andrew rest peacefully in the arms of God's love.

-Roger J. Vanden Busch