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# PARTNERS NEWSLETTER

*A Newsletter for the Ann Arbor Catholic Men's Movement*

**May 2017**

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*Men of Faith, linked as brothers, growing as husbands, fathers and disciples of Jesus Christ*

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## Is Singing Praying Twice?

By Caitlin Marchand from Catholic Exchange

The saints are always being misquoted, and one that always springs to mind for me is this line attributed to St. Augustine: To sing is to pray twice.

While I like the sentiment behind the line it never struck me as particularly Augustinian. At least in his Confessions, St. Augustine had a complicated relationship with liturgical music. In the following passage he examines his conflicting feelings about the pleasures of music:

Sometimes I appear to myself to give them more respect than, is fitting, as I perceive that our minds are more devoutly and earnestly elevated into a flame of piety by the holy words themselves when they are thus sung, than when they are not; and that all affections of our spirit, by their own diversity, have their appropriate measures in the voice and singing, wherewith by I know not what secret relationship they are stimulated. But the gratification of my flesh, to which the mind ought never to be given over to be enervated, often beguiles me, while the sense does not so attend on reason as to follow her patiently; but having gained admission merely for her sake, it strives even to run on before her, and be her leader. Thus in these things do I sin unknowing, but afterwards do I know it.

Sometimes, again, avoiding very earnestly this same deception, I err out of too great preciseness; and sometimes so much as to desire that every air of the pleasant songs to which David's Psalter is often used, be banished both from my ears and those of the Church itself;... Notwithstanding, when I call to mind the tears I shed at the songs of Your Church, at the outset of my recovered faith, and how even now I am moved not by the singing but by what is sung, when they are sung with a clear and skillfully modulated voice, I then

acknowledge the great utility of this custom. Thus vacillate I between dangerous pleasure and tried soundness; being inclined rather (though I pronounce no irrevocable opinion upon the subject) to approve of the use of singing in the church, that so by the delights of the ear the weaker minds may be stimulated to a devotional frame. Yet when it happens to me to be more moved by the singing than by what is sung, I confess myself to have sinned criminally, and then I would rather not have heard the singing.

Clearly, St. Augustine wasn't completely sold on the value of song at this point in his conversion.

So from whence comes this "to sing is to pray twice" line? Father Z gives a thorough and interesting answer here that determines Augustine never wrote the phrase but did write that singing belongs to one who loves. It seems that he eventually went with his inclination to approve of singing. Still, I think the misquoted line has

## Get Inspired! Bring a Friend!

**Thursday, May 18, 2017**

**Speaker: Martin Doman**

Served the Church as a Musician for over 20 years, New Director of Worship for Christ the King Parish, Ann Arbor, Worship Leader – Steubenville's Youth Conferences for 9 years, Dedicated to Church Renewal thru Eucharistic Praise & Worship, Married to Charlene & Father of 6, Graduate of Franciscan U.

**Topic: Praying Twice: The Power of Music to Open the Heart in Prayer**

**Meeting Location:**

**Christ the King Catholic Church**

For more information call (734) 930-4524 or visit our web site at [www.catholic-men.org](http://www.catholic-men.org)



**Our Next Meeting: Thursday, May 18th at**

**Christ the King Catholic Church 7:30 - 9:30 PM**

US 23 to Exit 41 at Plymouth Road, go **East** 1/3 mile to first traffic light at Earhart Rd and turn **left**. Go to next intersection and turn **left**. Turn left at the second driveway. The meeting is in the Church.

## Is Singing Praying Twice? (continued)

merit. It may not be from Augustine, but it isn't wholly wrong. I believe it can be argued that to sing can be in a sense to pray twice.

Of course this isn't a mathematical formula, as grace never works in such a way. 1 sung prayer does not equal 2 times 1 spoken. Yet, singing provides unique aids to mindful prayer. When we pray we form the words in our mind and then speak them. However this is such second nature to us that it can be done almost without thinking. To sing well requires careful formation of the words and notes. How easily we can mumble a Hail Mary. Not so singing Ave Maria. Furthermore, when we sing we add another step. After thinking and then forming the words, we then hear and enjoy them as they return to our ears in song. In this way we essentially pray twice: once as the orator and once as the congregation. Thus we are given the opportunity to focus more fully on the prayer we sing. This I think particularly applies to the simple yet pleasing hymns and chant. We are undistracted by aggressive accompaniment but relish the words of the melody.

**Catholics are a sacramental people.** We believe in the good of the world around us and the body. The senses of the body are goods and the things which appeal to those senses can be as well. So worship can call upon all the senses. Taste and see. And hear and feel and even smell. Incense, beautiful art, and song all serve as aids to worship.

When teaching children we try to engage as many senses as possible to appeal to the memory and thus lock information in. This theory applies also to the things of God. I still remember the statues that stood in the church where I was baptized, although I have not returned since I was seven. I still smell the clouds of incense and felt a burst of joy listening to a hymn at my wedding that echoed through my whole childhood.

As a domestic church our family employs singing throughout the year. Singing forms a daily part of family worship. We sing hymns appropriate to the season, we sing hymns appropriate to the trials and triumphs of the family. We have sung at the grave, and sung around the Christmas tree. We find that our children quickly memorize the tune and words of complex lyrics while they may still struggle to recite a complete Our Father without prompting. Singing is also a particularly communal form of prayer. The more voices are raised the fuller and more beautiful the song. We can delight each other with the

sounds of our voices and delight together in songs of praise.

So the words are not St. Augustine's. But he was certainly right to "acknowledge the great utility of this custom." Perhaps I possess one of those weaker minds stimulated to a devotional frame by singing. Still I believe that in a sense, to sing is to pray twice and to sing praise as a family is a great addition to the Catholic culture and spiritual life of the home.

### *A SUMMER BLESSING*

*May you walk with God this summer  
In whatever you do,  
Wherever you go.*

*Walking with God means...*

*Walking with honesty and with courage,  
Walking with love and respect  
And concern for the feelings of others.  
May you talk to God this summer  
And every day  
And in every situation.*

*Talking with God means...*

*Praying words of praise for the beauty of creation,  
Saying prayers of thanks for friends and good times,  
Asking God's help in all your decisions,  
Expressing sorrow when you have failed,  
May you talk with God every day.*

*Amen*

### **Enjoy Your Summer !**

The next meeting of the Ann Arbor Catholic Men's Movement will be in the Autumn of 2017. Watch for the announcement as to time and place. Be sure that we have your name and email address so that you are receiving our notifications. Call us at 734-904-4603 or send us an email to: [cmmdesk@gmail.com](mailto:cmmdesk@gmail.com) - if you have any questions.

*We gladly stand with Promise Keepers and St. Joseph Covenant Keepers.*

**To get on our mailing list e-mail [cmmdesk@gmail.com](mailto:cmmdesk@gmail.com)  
or write to the Ann Arbor Catholic Men's Movement, P.O. Box 466, Ann Arbor, MI 48106**