

Reflection, opinion: Impoverished

by Sarah Dixon Young

There are many kinds of poverty.

Several weeks ago, an eleven year old boy told me that when he was younger, there had been no food in the house. He had seen puppies nursing and had realized that they were receiving sustenance. He was so hungry that he had fed alongside those puppies from the dog's teat.

He said it with a slight blush, but matter-of-factly, as if it is what any hungry person would do. It was his only alternative to the



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hungry ache in his belly.

Then, he went on to describe a different sort of poverty. His parents have been living in another state for several years

now. He hungers for their return. There is no substitute for his mom and dad. He is impoverished, with nothing to fill the hungry ache in his soul.

No matter our income levels, we all face poverty of one kind or another. Grief, loss, purposelessness, need- the causes may differ, but poverty looks like the same empty ache, a longing to be filled.

The prophet Isaiah wrote, "He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; He seeks out a skillful craftsman to set

up an idol that will not move."

The poor man has nothing to offer to any god, so he chooses the poorest one because it costs him very little. He tries to make his poor idol the very best it can be, even employing a skillful craftsman to shape it and make it sound.

However, all wood rots. Even if the man had been rich enough to afford a god of gold or silver, he wouldn't have had anything to offer to it.

He has nothing to fill his hungry ache and lets his impoverishment dictate

his tastes and actions.

It drives him away from the truth that there is a Living God who made Him who is able to meet his every need.

Jesus told the multitudes on the hillside, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Anyone who comes to Him with empty hands, too poor to bring an offering, still finds their hearts filled with the new life He offers.

When we come hungry to Jesus, He fills us, no matter what type of poverty we're walking

through.

Jesus is the One who can fill the hungry ache of a child for his parents, the deathly craving of the addict, the lonely wail of the bereaved, and the emptiness of the modern man.

All we have to do is bring our emptiness to Him to be filled.

That's why Isaiah could also write, "Comfort, comfort My people, says Your God." He is a God who never rots and cannot be moved, rich enough to dispel any sort

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Pope Leo plays tennis religiously as part of an Augustinian devotion to sports and spirituality

PARIS (AP) — When Pope Leo XIV was elected last year and it emerged that he was a tennis player, his love of the sport was quickly celebrated during an audience with top-ranked Jannik Sinner.

In the ensuing months, Leo has tried to set aside time in his busy schedule to play the sport every week as part of his Augustinian devotion

to physical activity and spirituality.

The Rule of St. Augustine, an ancient guide for religious life, highlights the value of good habits.

"He's trying to keep some regularity to his routine that comes from the Rule," said the Rev. Rob Hagan, Prior of the Augustinian Province of St. Thomas of Villanova and team chaplain for the

men's basketball and football teams at Villanova University — the pope's alma mater in Pennsylvania.

Leo's devotion to St. Augustine was evident when he made a pilgrimage during his Africa trip in April to the archaeological ruins in Algeria where the influential 5th century theologian and philosopher lived and

died and wrote some of the most important works in Western thought.

The pope "highlights a very underappreciated Augustinian value — especially in this noisy world — and that is to develop your interior life," Hagan added in an interview with The Associated Press.

Leo likes to spend Mondays and Tuesdays at

the papal retreat in Castel Gandolfo in the hills outside Rome — where he plays tennis with his secretary, Monsignor Edgard Iván Rimaycuna Inga, and goes swimming and horseback riding, too.

Before becoming pope, then-Cardinal Robert Prevost talked about his tennis skills in an Interview with the Augustinian

Order.

"I consider myself quite the amateur tennis player," he said in the 2023 interview after taking over the Vatican's powerful Dicastery for Bishops following years as a missionary in Peru.

"Since leaving Peru I have had few occasions to practice so I am looking forward to getting back

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Devils Lake Journal, 155-940 is published Tuesday and Thursday at 516 4th Street NE, Devils Lake, ND 58301

Periodicals postage paid at Devils Lake, ND 58301

Postmaster: Send address changes to: Devils Lake Journal, 516 4th Street NE, Devils Lake, ND 58301



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