

## ROBERT F. PREVOST

On the occasion of the 80th birthday of Fr. Cornelius Petrus Mayer, O.S.A., it is an honor to be able to express on behalf of the Order of St. Augustine sincere appreciation and deep respect for Fr. Mayer's many years of dedicated investigation into the writings of the great philosopher and theologian Augustine of Hippo.

The works of St. Augustine are a valuable treasure, and as an Order we are dedicated to continued study of his teaching. Those who read St. Augustine are led to discover within the depths of his writings great insights into the life of the Church and the meaning of Christian faith, and in today's world, we are continually enriched by the message that we discover therein.

Augustine is as a great Christian thinker, and the importance of his thought goes far beyond the Catholic Church, as he has been influential in western culture for centuries. Studying Augustine continues to be a challenge that goes beyond the limits of any specific historical period. One of the finest contributions made by Fr. Petrus Mayer is found in his offering the opportunity to study and to understand Augustine to many new readers, through the project of publishing the *Augustinian Encyclopedia*.

In addition he has created an international network of scholars, who have devoted themselves to the study of Augustine. Fr. Mayer has made a great investment in promoting St. Augustine, and I am sure I speak for many people when we express our hope that the work of Fr. Mayer will continue to move toward its completion.

We live in a time that attaches great meaning to rational thought, and the reality of today's world provides one more reason why it is so valuable to study a person like Augustine, who searched throughout his whole life to understand humanity and the most significant events in life. Through his study and reflection, Augustine opened his mind to the source of life, to the One who goes beyond all thought: God, Creator and Father, who through the Word, Jesus Christ, continues to give life.

The constant searching in Augustine's life served him as a way of gaining understanding, and with both his faith and reason, he was guided by the message of the Word, seeing that God is the origin and the purpose of all. Once he understood this, Augustine in his teaching would continually insist upon this message for the people of his time. In his writings these thoughts have been passed on to us, and they become a beacon for all those who are searching for meaning in their life.

## XXIV

The scientific work of the man we honor, Fr. Petrus Mayer, serves to make the teaching of Augustine more understandable, putting this thought into our reach and helping people to understand that there is, beyond our own rational thought, another reality that can satisfy the thirst for life and meaning, and offer an insight into the One who is eternal.

Expressing my thanks to Fr. Petrus Mayer, I am truly happy, in the name of the Augustinian Order, to offer our most sincere congratulations on this occasion.

*Fr. Robert F. Prevost*  
*Prior General O.S.A.*