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## A Theology of Public Life

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CHARLES MATHEWES is Associate Professor of Religious Studies, University of Virginia. His other publications include *Evil and the Augustinian Tradition* (2001).

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*This book is for my mother  
Martha Thomas Mathewes*

IX.30.1935 – I.1.2006

*She loves me like a rock  
– Paul Simon*

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*Saeculum autem hoc eremus est*  
Augustine, *sermo*. 4.9.9

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## *Acknowledgments*

The tale grew in the telling. It began with reflection on a sermon, given by Revd. Sam Portaro at Brent House at the University of Chicago, on the oddities of the agenda of “putting Christ back into Christmas” – the upshot of which was that Christ would not get into Christmas by some sort of willed politico-cultural imposition, but rather by being found already there, in the vulgar and kitschy desires that we various theological snobs sniff at. I have written this always thinking of his last line: “That, after all, is how Christ got into Christmas in the first place.” That sermon, hundreds more, and the liturgies of which they were a part, shaped this book decisively; and so I thank Revd. Portaro, Revd. Bruce Epperly, Revd. Jeffrey Fishwick, Revd. Paula Kettlewell, and Revd. Jonathan Voorhees, and the communities of Brent House at the University of Chicago, St. Paul’s Charlottesville, and Christ Church Charlottesville, for teaching me the way of Christ, albeit as awkwardly and abashedly as Episcopalians do that sort of thing.

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Possession, and the Christian Faith,” gave me whatever instruction I have on matters relating to religion and culture.

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Charlottesville, Virginia  
January 6, 2006

*Abbreviations for works by St. Augustine*

<i>ad Gal.</i>	<i>expositio epistolae ad Galatas</i>
<i>conf.</i>	<i>confessiones</i>
<i>contra acad.</i>	<i>contra academicos</i>
<i>DCD</i>	<i>de civitate Dei</i>
<i>DDC</i>	<i>de doctrina Christiana</i>
<i>de mor.</i>	<i>de moribus ecclesiae catholicae</i>
<i>de pat.</i>	<i>de patientiae</i>
<i>de Trin.</i>	<i>de Trinitate</i>
<i>DUC</i>	<i>de utilitate credendi</i>
<i>DVR</i>	<i>de vera religione</i>
<i>enmar.</i>	<i>enmarationes in Psalmos</i>
<i>ep.</i>	<i>epistulae</i>
<i>Gen. ad litt.</i>	<i>de Genesi ad litteram</i>
<i>in Io. ep.</i>	<i>in Iohannis epistulam tractatus</i>
<i>sermo.</i>	<i>sermones</i>