LETTER FROM THE PRIOR PROVINCIAL

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE AUGUSTINIANS,

Dear Friends of the Augustinians,

As we come to the end of another academic year, we look forward to a restful and renewing summer!

The Augustinians from the Federation of North America (FANA) will gather at Villanova during the second week of June to discuss our future together. At this point we are expecting 175 friars to be in attendance. Please pray for us!

At the end of that week, we will celebrate the ordination to the priesthood of Stephen Isley, O.S.A. at St. Rita Shrine Chapel on June 17th at 4:00 pm. Our own Dan Turley, O.S.A. will be the ordaining Bishop. Fr. Stephen will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving the following morning at St. Rita Shrine at 11:00 am and the following Sunday in his home parish in Wichita, Kansas. I am happy to be traveling there to be with him and his family and friends. Fr. Stephen will be assigned to Cascia Hall in Tulsa to teach and be involved in campus ministry.

Thanks to all of you who attended and supported our Gala. It was a wonderful evening of Augustinian Community and hospitality! And we had great success in raising more funds for our men in formation...our best one to date!

Mark your calendars now for April 27, 2018 when we will honor Brother Jerome Sysko, O.S.A., Fr. John Merkelis, O.S.A., and Augustinian Affiliates from Tulsa Phyllis and Tony Lauinger.

Finally, we will start the election process in the fall for the next provincial. Please keep us in your prayers as we look for our future leader of the Province, and be assured of our prayers for you and your intentions.

Enjoy the Summer!

Sincerely in Christ and St. Augustine,

Very Reverend Bernard C. Scianna, O.S.A., Ph.D.
Prior Provincial of Chicago, Canada, and Chulucanas, Peru

COVER PHOTO: FR. DON BATES, O.S.A. WITH THREE PIECES FROM HIS COLLECTION: "WEDDING OF WORD & IMAGE: ILLUSTRATIONS OF PASSAGES FROM THE CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTINE"
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Mission Statement of the Midwest Augustinians
We, the Augustinians of the Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel, are members of the worldwide Order of St. Augustine in the Roman Catholic Church. Centered in the Eucharist and prayer, we search for God in community by sharing our lives, goods and spiritual journey with each other and the people of God. In harmony of mind and heart on our journey toward God, our experience of common life flows into and shapes our ministries. We continue to serve the Church in schools, parishes and missions as we seek to discern new paths of service to which God calls us.
Our fifth annual Augustinian Gala was an extraordinary success! We set a new record this year, with net proceeds looking to be near $170,000! This will go a long way in covering the annual expenses for our men in formation. Great memories and inspired generosity were in the air as the Augustinian family came together to honor the service of Fr. Jim Friedel, O.S.A., Fr. Tom McCarthy O.S.A., and Augustinian Affiliates Anne and Don Berschback.

Thank you to our gala committee, our sponsors, guests, and advertisers. You made it happen!

Look back at some of the great moments of the night in this photospread, and visit us online at midwestaugustinians.org to see more photos of the night as well as our three tribute videos to the honorees. As Fr. Bernie announced at the end of the night, we look forward to seeing you again next year at the Drake Hotel, Chicago, on Friday, April 27, 2017, when we will honor Fr. John Merkelis, O.S.A., Br. Jerome Sysko, O.S.A., and Augustinians Affiliates Tony and Phyllis Lauinger.

Watch our video tributes to this year’s honorees at midwestaugustinians.org/tributes
TINIAN GALA

Augustinian Men in Initial Formation

Dcn. John Sfire invites the Men in Formation on the dais

Bp. Robert Prevost, O.S.A. (center), visits from Peru

Fr. Jim Friedel, O.S.A., 2017 Honoree

Mary Friedel-Hunt

Alumni of St. Augustine Seminary with Fr. Jim
A short time ago someone asked me how I felt about being here tonight and sharing a few thoughts with you. My response was that I feel like the body at an Irish wake: the body is needed in order to have the wake but no one expects it to say very much.

I grew up in Chicago, about two blocks from Wrigley Field. In 1950 we moved to Park Forest. I graduated from St. Agnes grade school in 1951. Soon thereafter the athletic director from Rich High School called my parents about coming there to play baseball and basketball. I was thrilled, but if you have an Irish Catholic mother and a German Catholic father, you are going to go to a Catholic High School. So goodbye Rich and hello to Mendel High School. So began my four-year 30-mile trek to and from Mendel.

Our Park Forest parish was St. Irenaeus. The pastor was an odd piece of furniture. Augustinians from Mendel would help out on the weekends. My folks would occasionally invite them for breakfast. I was taken by their friendliness and willingness to chat and to engage in banter that I could understand. I remember Fr. John Seary, Fr. Jim Lyne (whom we called “clackers” because of the sound his false teeth made), Fr Bennie McConville (whom we called “The Skull” because he looked like a skull) and Fr. Joe Henessey (whom we called “Gramps” because he looked like everyone’s grandfather). Little did I know that a seed was being planted which would later help me put things in perspective.

Mendel was the former Pullman Technical High School. The Augustinians purchased it but it needed much refurbishing. The Augustinians saved some money by doing some of these tasks themselves. Day after day I would see them working around the school and grounds. I saw Fr. Pete La Morte on his tractor cutting the grass, Fr. Joe Hennessey building the dining room tables, Fr. Bill O’Rourke organizing the raffle sale. Bill was not the best of teachers but he did sell the most raffle tickets and that was all that mattered to us students since we got a day off of school.

I graduated from Mendel in 1955 as a member of the first class. Two friends and I got together and decided we would go to Loras College. Fr. Karl Shroeder was a diocesan priest from Dubuque who taught English. Karl was a tough but very good teacher. One day after class he asked if I had ever thought of the priesthood. I told him “no.” Heck, I was kicked off the 8th grade altar servers for being a goof before I had even thought of the priesthood. I told him “no.”

I was kicked off the 8th grade altar servers for being a goof before I had the chance to serve my first Mass. He suggested I speak with one of the priests at Mendel. I said “OK” but first wanted to speak with my parents. They were most supportive. They said, “If you decide to become a priest, we would be most proud of you as we are of your sisters but we will be proud whatever you decide to do. You are always welcome here whatever you decide.”

I called Fr. Jimmy Lyne, the priest we called “Clackers.” He was gracious, happy and a truly holy man. Jim explained what would be expected of me if I decided to enter the Augustinian seminary.

With Jim’s help I decided to enter the seminary…so off I went to Holland MI where I took a crash course in Latin, a subject I had not taken at Mendel. From Holland we went to the novitiate in Oconomowoc WI, then to Villanova near Philadelphia, then to St. Louis, and finally to the newly constructed Tolentine Center. Talk about “Join the OSA and see the USA!”

As time went on, our class grew to 15. We were ordained on February 6, 1965. It was a long journey but one I have never regretted. Along the way I have met many friends whose friendship I treasure to this day. I have also experienced the death of classmates: Nick Ritter, Dick Voigt, Dave Brecht, Mark Thedens and most difficult of all was Al Gorka with whom I was chatting five minutes before he fell to his death in St. Louis. Al was a close friend.

I have learned many valuable things along the way, among which are:
—That having a newborn nephew fall asleep in your arms is the most peaceful feeling in the world.
—That sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart that understands.
—That the easiest way for me to grow as a person is to surround myself with people who are smarter and holier.

Keeping things in perspective

Delivered by Father Jim Friedel, O.S.A. at this year’s Augustinian Gala

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Word & Image: Fr. Bates Illustrates St. Augustine’s Confessions

I would read a few pages of Augustine’s Confessions, and an image would appear to me,” said Fr. Don Bates, O.S.A., as he points toward his painting of a Herculean figure bearing a large glimmering honeycomb atop his shoulders. Titled “Themes Coming Together,” the abstract, collage image is accompanied by red hand-written lines from Saint Augustine’s autobiography that begins: “But the abyss of the human conscience lies naked in your EYES…”

This painting is only one among 80 that illustrate the journey of Saint Augustine from childhood to teenage despair through to his adult conversion and redemption. As an Augustinian friar, Fr. Bates sees this collection—begun in 1988—as his gift to the Order that he has served since he professed vows in 1953. Now, nearly 30 years later, he hopes that the collection can be displayed in a permanent home.

The collection, “Wedding of Word and Image: Illustrations of Passages from the Confessions of St. Augustine,” is founded on Fr. Bates’ notion that “St. Augustine’s journey reflects our own.” In this respect his paintings not only symbolize Augustine’s journey to Christianity, but also “reflect” Fr. Bates’ own interior life.

Fr. Bates, who studied painting at the Catholic University of America, grew the project out of unlikely yet fitting circumstances. In 1988, the 54-year-old Fr. Bates went in for hip surgery and began to receive a series of x-rays in 14 x 18” cardboard covers. These covers offered a ready-made canvas for him on which to explore St. Augustine’s own journey. As the x-ray allowed him to see, literally, his own interior life, so Don would use the 14 x 18” cardboard as window in St. Augustine’s own journey into his spiritual interior.

“I liked the constraint of having to fit within the bounds of the x-ray covers. As I continued the paintings I was lucky to find an x-ray technician who would provide me with free cardboard covers,” said Fr. Bates.

Visually the series unites around fragmentation, what Fr. Bates calls a “theme-image” of brokenness and shattering. Viewers will not find direct, literal representations of events in Augustine’s life. Rather, Fr. Bates attempts to “capture” the passion of Augustine’s life in images that capture a personal reaction to his writings. The corresponding quotations from St. Augustine are handwritten into the space of each canvas; however, they are frequently, intentionally illegible. “The images are meant to be illustrative of the words on the printed page,” explained Fr. Bates, “so that seeing the images is another form of reading.”

In order to capture the depth and breadth of St. Augustine’s journey, Fr. Bates employs a wide variety of media and imagery. For example, in “Know Thyself”
"The Secret of Your Face"

Hand-written text in right corner (excerpt):

"Give thyself to me, give thyself once more to me, I love thee . . . if my love is too small a thing, grant me to love more intensely. I cannot measure to now how much my love falls short of sufficiency, that I will run to thy embrace and never be turned away until it is hidden in the secret of your face..."

- Confessions, XIII

"Themes Coming Together"

Hand-written text (excerpt):

"But the abyss of the human conscience lies naked in your EYES, O Lord, so would anything in me by a secret even I were unwilling to confess to You? I WOULD BE HIDING YOU FROM MYSELF, BUT NOT MYSELF FROM YOU."

- Confessions, X

"Scriptures' Sweetness"

Text:

"I heard your answer, O Lord my God, and from this truth I sucked out a drop of sweetness."

- Confessions, XIII
Fr. Bates explains his painting, "Themes Coming Together"

A Long-lasting Gift: We would like to acknowledge the following members of the Restless Hearts Society for including the Augustinians in their wills or estate plans.

Pierre M. Adams
Joe Bamberger
Anne Bierschbach
Don R. Bierschbach
Chuck Cassity
James Corona
James V. Corrigan
Delores Denning
Joseph A. Drap
Sandra Lyn Drap
Carolyn R. Drap
Gregory Flanagan
Dr. Robert J. Fredericks
John M. Freese
Mary Friedel-Hunt
John Gaberino
Ardith Goodroe
Frank D. Grimaldi
Winifred M. Guthikonda
Richard Hagedorn
Michael C. Kirby
Barbara Klasing
Wayne Klasing
John N. Kost
Sandra Kruse
John D. Kwiatkowski
Robert J. La Fortune
Bonnie Leighty
Tom Leo
Dolores P. Lundeen
Robert H. Mace, Jr., Th.M.
Elizabeth Manning
Michael Manning
Dr. Terrance McGuire
Helen J. Merkelis
Donald Miller
Debra Molinari
Thomas J. Moore
Michael Schneider
Adele O'Sullivan
Connee Pines
Edward Raher
Mary Rasmussen
Richard Rasmussen
Bernice A. Raubiskis
Pauline Reidy
Michael B. Schneider, Sr.
Lisa Solava
Richard Solava
Josh Sosnowski
Ned Van Hamm
David Vaughan
Lisa Vaughan
Martin Wojcik

(which Fr. Bates is shown holding in the picture on p. 7), a self-portrait is partially obscured by a honeycomb pattern made of a metallic gold wrapping paper. The metallic gold in turn gives way a series of concentric circles in ink and paper. A reflective silver mylar film also appears frequently throughout the series mirroring the face of the viewer and enters him or her personally into the painting.

The first 26 paintings, which Fr. Bates completed from 1988 to 1993, cover the biographical portions of the Confessions leading to Augustine's baptism. As he worked through the book in chronological Order, Fr. Bates found that the imagery gathered around 12 themes, such as “Knottedness” and “Sweetness Fled/Sweetness Found.” Augustine’s description of the scriptures as “sweet honey,” for example, gave rise to a motif of golden honeycombs in many paintings.

The series was recommenced in 2003 when Fr. Bates began doing a series of self-portraits that were entered into the imagery of Augustine’s autobiography. Fr. Bates found that the self-portraits added a sense of “the unity of the search for self-knowledge and the search for a knowledge of God.”

Aside from very limited exhibitions, Fr. Bates’ collection has not yet had an audience. “I don’t believe most of the Augustinian friars are aware of this project,” he said. Currently, the majority of the collection is housed under the care of St. Jude parishioner Jeff Ohner in New Lenox, IL. Four paintings from the series are on display in the Colegio Santa Monica House in Rome.

Having finished the project and now in retirement in Crown Point, IN, Fr. Bates has now put his efforts toward finding a location to permanently display the paintings, ideally within one of the Augustinian parishes or homes. “I hope the Augustinians accept it as a legacy. This is my gift to the Order.”
By taking on the name of Saint Augustine, one of the Church’s most influential theologians, the Augustinian friars recognize him as their “father, master, and spiritual guide” (Constitution). Above all, this means that Augustinians lead a life in Christ-centered community, directed by the example and writings of St. Augustine. Yet, the Augustinian friars are also called in a special way to promote the writings of St. Augustine through their schools and parishes. As stated in the Constitution of the Augustinian Order, friars should answer “the Church’s call to keep alive the spiritual and doctrinal legacy of Saint Augustine.”

Any Catholic who was blessed enough to be introduced to the Confessions in school, knows the importance of this call. To understand how the Midwest Province keep the legacy St. Augustine alive, our newsletter will be featuring a series of interviews with friars about teaching his writings in the classroom. In this issue we speak with Fr. Rich Young, O.S.A., Fr. Rich professed his solemn vows to the Order in 2014, and currently serves as the Chair of the Theology Department at Providence Catholic High School.

**What writings of St. Augustine have you taught at our high schools?**

When I was at St. Rita High School, I initiated a senior level honors theology class called “Augustine for Our Time.” I focused on the Confessions and a number of his Sermons, as well as parts of his other writings. Now I am at Providence Catholic High School, and am the newly appointed Department Chair as well. This past year we were looking at curriculum, and although we do not have an Augustine class as such, we teach the first year students about Augustine, touching on his life and works. I try to integrate some of Augustine’s insights in the classes that I do teach. In our planning, we are hoping to have a more intensive study of Augustine and Augustinian spirituality as an elective for the seniors.

**What do you find is the most appealing aspect of St. Augustine for High School students?**

I think Augustine, when we look at him in his own words, becomes much more human and accessible. I try to focus on his personal journey, and try to help the students to find how God is moving in their own journey as well. Let’s be honest, he had family issues, had a very adventuresome youth - in thought, word and deed! - and he pondered the big questions. I think we need to assist our students in exploring the big questions: Who is God? Who am I? Where am I going? Who am I going with? Am I valued? Who and what do I value?. Augustine was all about dialogue and he was even willing to change course mid-stream. If we keep to Augustine the “theologian” - and I am not saying that is a bad thing, just not helpful to high schoolers if that is all they get - then he becomes unreachable (even for me!). However, I like having them read the Confessions, and even our Rule. There is something refreshingly real and timely about his journey.
and the way he invites us to live as one mind and one heart, on the way to God.

What is the greatest challenge when teaching St. Augustine at the high school level?

The greatest challenge is getting the students to believe that they can actually "get" Augustine. He can be pretty convoluted and plumbs depths we are sometimes afraid to pursue. It is important to, like Augustine, use the world around them and within them, to assist in the journey to understanding him.

What are the common reactions from high school students to The Confessions? Or, have you been surprised by any reactions?

I love when a young person can suddenly relate to his questions or his life experience. Who doesn’t struggle with family, friends, meaning and purpose? Augustine doesn’t give answers (and neither do I); I invite the students to be willing to enter the journey, to be ok with being unsure, and to stop worrying about "being right" and having the "right answer." It can drive them nuts sometimes, especially in modern grade-driven education. I tell them to ask the questions and enjoy the questioning.

My hope is that they really can discover the Teacher within. As you know the core values of Augustinian Education are TRUTH, UNITY, LOVE. My hope is that in the Augustinian community that is the classroom, that is the school, they can discover that Truth is truth-telling, truth-seeking, and even questioning. Unity in community-sharing, and Love is befriending, brothering or sistering, and all this as they are, in their journey, because we are all on that journey to God - one in mind and heart.

continued from page 7

He is a man who has a tough time keeping things in perspective. Then their oldest daughter graduated from high school and decided to go to college, but not college Chicago, a college in California. So whatever perspective he had was out the window now.

So off to California she goes...now she was not a great student, so her father began to send a trail of letters, at least one a week. At the end of the first semester the daughter decided to write her dad a letter. This is what she wrote:

Dear Dad,

Everything is going well this semester...so you can stop worrying about me. I am really, very, very happy. Dad, you would simply love Jeremy. He is a wonderful man and the first three months of our marriage have been very happy. But dad there is even more good news. The drug rehab program we are both in just told us that the twins to be born soon will not be addicted at birth.

DAD TURNS THE LETTER OVER

Now, dad, there is no Jeremy...l am not married or pregnant. I have never abused drugs...but I did get a ‘C’ in chemistry...so try to keep things in perspective.

Thanks for your presence here tonight...for your support and love through your friendship, prayer and financial support...and speaking for myself thanks for helping me to keep things in perspective.

2017 PRIESTHOOD ANNIVERSARIES

60 Years
Fr. Al Burke, O.S.A.
Fr. Ron Schieble, O.S.A.
Fr. Erwin J. Dodge, O.S.A.

50 Years
Fr. Bill Sullivan, O.S.A.
Fr. John Tasto, O.S.A.

40 Years
Fr. Joe McCormick, O.S.A.
Fr. Mike Slattery, O.S.A.

25 Years
Fr. John Sotak, O.S.A.

2017 PROFESSION OF VOWS ANNIVERSARIES

60 years
Br. Bob Schurman, O.S.A.
Fr. Fred Taggart, O.S.A.
Fr. Jerry Van Overbeek, O.S.A.

50 years
Fr. Terry Deffenbaugh, O.S.A.

40 Years
Fr. Paul Galetto, O.S.A.
Fr. Tom Griffin, O.S.A.

25 Years
Fr. Francis Galvan, O.S.A.
Fr. Chris Steinle, O.S.A.
Sometimes it takes a while to build up the courage to make an important phone call. Especially when this call could send your life in a radically new trajectory. When in college, and discerning his vocation, Br. Joe Roccasalva received from his father a business card of the Augustinian Vocations Director along with a suggestion to call him. “I held onto that card for two years before I finally called that number,” recalled Br. Joe.

That simple act, two years in the making, of picking up the phone and calling the number, changed his life and led Br. Joe to his vocation with the Augustinians.
This Director of Augustinian Vocations, one Fr. Tom McCarthy, was no stranger to Br. Joe. For years, Fr. Tom had served as a visiting priest at Br. Joe’s home parish and grammar school, St. Cajetan. The parish of St. Cajetan, located in the Beverly neighborhood of Chicago’s southwest side, was a spiritual and literal home for Br. Joe while growing up, as his father—also named Joe Roccasalva—served as deacon to the parish. For his part, Br. Joe put his talents to use from an early age as a choir member and altar server, and later, a cantor.

The seeds that mature into our most significant life decisions are often planted many years in advance. When preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation, Br. Joe’s 8th grade class went on a contemplative and educational retreat led by the Augustinian friar, Fr. Tom. Within this retreat, Br. Joe first encountered the teachings and life of Saint Augustine. While many of the Augustinian friars cite a deep personal connection with the story of St. Augustine as the decisive turning point in their call to the Order, Br. Joe would not return again to the saint until years later when he had begun his initial formation.

"I held onto [Fr. Tom’s number] for two years before I finally called."

-Br. Joe

“I think if you are a young man at a Catholic grade school,” said Br. Joe, “you will feel a call to the priesthood at some point. But, that usually fades away, or you actively push it away. For me, in grade school, I pushed it away.” Following St. Cajetan, Br. Joe went to Marian Catholic High School, in Chicago Heights, where he encountered the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois. It was here that Br. Joe came to know what religious life looked like.

After Marian Catholic, Br. Joe entered into Saint Xavier University as Mathematics/Secondary Education major in 2008, and he became deeply involved in the campus ministry program. A pivotal moment came in his freshman year when Br. Joe’s name was given to the Archdiocese of Chicago for dinner with Cardinal Francis George and men from various colleges in the area. Through this, he had the opportunity to speak with the Cardinal and his own peers regarding the discernment of their vocations. On a visit back to his high school, Br. Joe was talking with one of the campus ministers, Sr. Teresa Marron, about his discernment, and she told him “Look at orders, too.” Br. Joe continued looking at the Archdiocese remembering what Sr. Teresa had told him. It wasn’t until his senior year that he realized that the Archdiocesan life was not his call. So, Br. Joe began his search of various orders, and like a good millennial, he went to the internet and was inundated with various orders sending him information on their orders. One struck him, the Midwest Augustinians. He remembered the card his father had given him two years prior and he decided to finally call Fr. Tom McCarthy.

When Br. Joe finally reached out to Fr. Tom, the two arranged a meeting at St. Rita High School to discuss the questions Br. Joe had about formation, religious life, or any other questions. “The time just flew by. Two hours felt like nothing.” From that point forward, Br. Joe began to attend various events that the Midwest Augustinians held. He even began to attend the monthly novenas at the Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia Chapel. In the Spring of 2012, Br. Joe attended the Augustinian discernment weekend led by Fr. Tom on the east coast to introduce men to the life and spirituality of an Augustinian friar. Here he was, eight years later, attending another retreat by Fr. Tom, hearing with new ears, and seeing with new eyes. At this retreat were seven men, four of which would eventually enter the Midwest Augustinians.

During his senior year, Br. Joe was given more help in his discernment when the Augustinians began to assist Saint Xavier with weekend masses in the wake of the departure of the chaplain. Among the priests were Fr. Bernie Scianna, Fr. Rich Young, and Fr. Tom McCarthy. When Br. Joe graduated, he took some time to work and truly discern God’s call. So, Br. Joe worked as a substitute at Mother McAuley High School and as a tutor at Huntington Learning Center. After a few years, Joe realized that God truly was calling him to the Augustinians, so he asked Fr. Tom for the application and moved forward in his vocational journey. Many of us quite understandably speak of entering religious life in terms of giving up anything in the pursuit of his vocation. “If you are truly called,” he said, “it’s not hard to give up anything.”
Peruvian Missions Face Devastating Floods

By Fr. John Lydon, O.S.A.

At the end of 2015, most experts projected that the El Niño phenomenon would be especially strong. The El Niño affects the climate in the whole world, and usually for northern Peru it means torrential rains, for which the country is not well prepared. The El Niño did indeed come in 2016, affecting the climate in many places (including the US), but it had no effect in Northern Peru. However, as if the giant was only sleeping, this year the it came to Peru with a vengeance, and the result in many parts, including Trujillo, were the worst floodings ever recorded. Since 1925, Trujillo has only flooded once, yet this year the rivers overflowed on 7 separate occasions, and flash massive-flooding embraced large parts of the city and outlying areas.

Thousands of people lost their homes due to the fact that many of them are built with adobe bricks, which collapse if they become wet in the base. Since it almost never rains, adobe is not a problem, but when it floods, such homes are particularly susceptible to collapsing altogether. The adobe is much cheaper than brick, so many of the poorest have their homes made of this material.

In addition of the collapsing homes, the flooding destroyed the main canal system for the drinking water of Trujillo, which comes from lakes and rivers in the mountains, 200 miles away. This caused another crisis: trying to deliver drinking water to a city of 800,000.

Thankfully part of the city of Trujillo still had a functioning well system, and, once this was activated, about half of the population did not lose drinking water. Yet that still leaves an enormous number of people to serve.

All of this has just overwhelmed the government structures, and its response has been small in light of the size of the need.

As a response to the crisis, parishes throughout the city organized solidarity campaigns so that those who were less affected could share with those who lost everything. So while the national government was largely paralyzed in its response, the local parish structures were able to organize a network of volunteers to stretch out the helping hand.
Our local Augustinian parishes in Trujillo (St. Rita and Our Lady of Montserrat), along with our school (St. Augustine) went door to door in a campaign to collect food stuffs and clothing for what are called here "los damnificados". They are the people that lost almost everything, as opposed to "los afectados" who may have had flooding in their homes, but did not lose their homes.

After gathering the donations, the seminarians and priests took them to a particularly hard hit section of the city, near the ocean, where Augustinians sisters and other religious women attend to the pastoral needs. While there, distributing the goods, another one of the 7 flash floods occurred, and the waters came rushing into the section just as we were in the middle of distributing the food supplies.

Within a question of minutes, what was a just a muddy area, became a rising river of water. We quickly finished the distribution, but it became very difficult to get out of where we were. It took two hours to simply go 1/2 mile because the rising waters made it a particularly hard ordeal for us to advance.

Thankfully, we were able to make it through, and get back to our home, which is in a slightly more elevated part of the city, thus saving us from being seriously affected. We did lose one wall of the garden section of the house; however, our living structure did not suffer major damage. The city is very flat and you wouldn’t normally notice that some parts are more elevated than others, except when something like this occurs, and you see where the water rushes towards and what areas are spared. We are lucky that we lived in one of the areas spared of the flash flooding which does the greatest damage.

The further north one goes in Peru, the longer the rains lasted and the more flooding occurred. So even greater damage was suffered in Chiclayo (where Augustinian Bishop Bob Prevost, O.S.A. serves) and in Chulucanas, still further north (where Augustinian Bishop Dan Turley, O.S.A. serves).

Through it all, there were many signs of grace, as people came together, shared the little they had with those who had nothing, building a spirit where the response was one of hope and charity, showing the true nature of the Peruvian people.
St. Rita Parish stands with immigrant population

The Hispanic Immigrant Social Ministry of the Archdiocese of Chicago, known as Pastoral Migratoria, formed as a response to the failure of the US Senate to pass comprehensive immigration reform in 2007. The stated goal of the new ministry was to empower Hispanic immigrants to “help one another through increasing, urgent, basic human and pastoral needs in the absence of immigration policy restructure.”

The 2016 presidential elections and the proposed immigration policy reforms have brought renewed concerns over the rights of Chicago’s Hispanic immigrant population and, in turn, increased activity among the leadership of Pastoral Migratoria.

The Augustinian parish of St. Rita of Cascia in the south side neighborhood of Chicago Lawn is among the 40 Hispanic parishes with an active Pastoral Migratoria ministry, and the political developments of 2017 have been met with a proactive movement among its population focused on combatting prejudice and defending immigrant rights.

Pastor Rev. Tony Pizzo, O.S.A. traveled with a bus of St. Rita parishioners to lead the interreligious prayer at the January 14 Immigration March and Rally for Resistance, Unity, and Respect for All. Standing with fellow Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim clergy, Fr. Tony spoke to the crowd about the Church’s long tradition of welcoming immigrants, and noted that those attending the rally were standing in unity with their immigrant brothers and sisters who bring a richness of culture and color, of skills and intelligence that make this American continent great.

“Our faith moves us and our commitment to the principles of democracy compels us to appreciate, respect and solidify our relationships with all who are of good character and who embrace unity and respect,” he said. “We are committed to walk with, live with, and work with these our immigrant brothers and sisters who seek nothing more than to live in peace and harmony and mutual respect through our diversity in this great nation.”

Behind the message delivered at the rally downtown lies a deep commitment among the St. Rita community to offer the immigrant members of their community a path to US citizenship. Currently, biweekly citizenship classes, led by Adriana Morales, form the most active part of the parish’s Pastoral Migratoria.

Since commencing over a year and a half ago, these classes have helped 13 people to gain US citizenship, and approximately 60 people are still currently taking classes. “We are very blessed to help contribute (albeit in a small way) to the pool of new citizens of good character and deep faith,” Pastor Tony Pizzo, O.S.A. said.

In direct response to the immigration policies proposed by President Donald Trump in his first months in Office—such as the travel ban and border wall—the parishioners of St. Rita of Cascia drafted a letter to the president asking that he not seek to pass laws that fostered fear and anger. Collecting over 600 signatures, the letter read, in part: “Instead of fear, we choose compassion. Instead of despair, we choose hope. And instead of ignorance and disrespect, we choose understanding and acceptance.”

As an Augustinian parish, St. Rita of Cascia reflects the decisive commitment made at the 2007 General Chapter of the Augustinian Order to promote justice and peace according to the social teaching of the Church. Those interested in contributing to the support of the Pastoral Migratoria ministries of St. Rita of Cascia are invited to contact Pastoral Associate Jenny Meehan at 773-434-9600.
Fr. Bernie Scianna, O.S.A., the Prior Provincial of the Midwest Augustinians, says that it is the duty - indeed the sacred obligation - of our Augustinian Province to see that our retired and infirm friars receive the care they need in the twilight years of their lives. These men have lived lives of great purpose and have significantly impacted the lives of tens of thousands of men, women, and children in Chicagoland and elsewhere in the Midwest. It would be hard to live a more meaningful and impactful life.

Finding the funds to care for these 30 elderly and infirm friars is no easy task. The total cost of that care is about one million dollars annually. So it was wonderful news when Mr. Nathaniel Grey, a trustee of the Bernard Heerey Foundation, informed the Augustinians that the foundation would consider an application to support elderly friars who had served in Chicago, which most of our men have done. The Bernard Heerey Foundation has once again granted the Augustinians $50,000 in 2017 to cover the care of one of our friars for a year.

Bernard Heerey, for whom the foundation is named, was a successful local businessman and Catholic who loved Chicago and its people. He died in 1999 at the age of 79, but his vision for improving the spiritual landscape of Chicago continues. Mr. Grey stated that these kinds of impactful grants would be in keeping with Mr. Heerey’s values and charitable priorities. Needless to say, the Augustinians are very grateful to Mr. Grey and to his deceased friend and colleague, Bernard Heerey.

The Midwest Augustinians began serving in the City of Chicago in 1905. Today, there are many retired Augustinians in the Chicago area. The majority of them retire around age 78 or 79; most of them have each given 50 years of service as pastors, teachers, chaplains, or other religious ministries to the people of Chicago. In keeping with the Augustinian vow of poverty, they have lived modest lives of service with no thought of their own personal retirement, health care, or putting away funds for themselves.

Who's On The Move?

Fr. Stephen Isley, O.S.A., will be moving to Cascia Hall following his priestly ordination this summer.

Fr. Don Lewandowski, O.S.A., will leave his position as Pastor at St. Jude Parish, New Lenox, on July 1 to serve as Prior and Treasurer of the St. Augustine Monastery at Cascia Hall, Tulsa.

Fr. Joseph Mostardi, O.S.A., of the Eastern Province will become the new Formation Director at Saint Augustine Friary, Chicago. He will assume this role at the beginning of August.

Fr. Robert Basler, O.S.A., will take over the position of Administrator at St. Jude Parish, New Lenox.

Fr. Joseph McCormick, O.S.A., will leave the Our Lady of the Lake parish in Edwardsburg and St. Anne Parish in Cassopolis, MI effective July 1 and begin an appointment as Pastor of St. Bernard Parish, Homer Glen, IL.

Br. Jack Tierney, O.S.A., will spend his Pastoral Year at St. Nicholas of Tolentine Parish, Bronx, NY, where he will also serve at the United Nations.

In the coming months, several Augustinians will be moving on from their current positions to take on new assignments in new communities. Here are the most recent updates:
“One Mind, One Heart” - St. Augustine

Best wishes to
Our Mother of Good Counsel Province

St. Augustine Seminary - Class of 1967

Celebrating 50 Years!
Augustinians in Formation

Men of Heart
Thank You to Our Newest Donors!

We are so grateful for those that join us in our mission to serve the Church through their charitable support! In each issue, we thank those newest donors that have given their first donation to support our Province. Thank you to the following donors that began donating between January 1 and May 19. We ask that all our readers keep these newest supporters in prayer. Thank you!

If you feel your contribution is not properly reflected in this report or if you see errors, we apologize and ask you to contact the Advancement Office at advancement@midwestaugustinians.org at 773-595-4008.

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St. Rita Shrine Chapel, Chicago, IL