SUMMER 2017

The Midwest Augustinian

"One Mind, One Heart"

IN THIS ISSUE:

PRIESTHOOD ORDINATION  p. 4

CONVOCATION AT VILLANOVA  p. 7

"MY FIRST YEAR AS A PRIEST"  p. 8
DEAR FRIENDS OF THE AUGUSTINIANS,

Summer has come and gone so quickly, but it was filled with a great deal of activities, mostly positive, but also with some difficult things.

We began the summer with a Convocation of The Augustinians of the Federation which includes Villanova, Midwest, Canadian and Californian Provinces at Villanova University. There were 173 of the 275 Augustinians in the United States and Canada present. There were also a few members of our Vicariate from Peru present with us. It was an upbeat and positive gathering about our future together! The Opening Mass led by the Prior General from Rome included the Renewal of Vows of 17 of our young men in formation. It was a great sign of hope for us! While it was not a juridical meeting, we decided to continue to find ways to collaborate more closely across provincial lines, form a task force to seriously look into the issues, both pro and con, regarding unification, and to gather in Convocation in San Diego in 2021.

After the conclusion of the Convocation, we all rushed back to Chicago for the Ordination of Fr. Stephen Isley, O.S.A. It was a great way to end the week, and always a pleasure to have our own Bishop Dan Turley, O.S.A. in town to be the ordaining Bishop! The following weekend, I traveled to Wichita to be part of the Mass of Thanksgiving with Fr. Stephen’s Family, Friends and Parishioners.

On a sad note, the Midwest Province formally withdrew from Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Edwardsburg, Michigan which means we no longer have any parishes in Michigan. We are grateful to the Bishop of Kalamazoo and the Parishioners for their understanding, but it is always hard to say goodbye for all of us. Fr. Joe McCormick, O.S.A. has moved to the Joliet diocese where he will be Pastor of St. Bernard’s Parish in Homer Glen, Illinois. He will be officially installed as Pastor on Sunday, September 10th at the 11:30 Mass.

Some other recent assignments of Friars this summer include:
Fr. Jerry Van Overbeek, O.S.A. to Bellesini Friary in Crown Point for health reasons.
Fr. Bernie Danber, O.S.A. to Bellesini Friary in Crown Point to assist with health care there.
Br. Paul Koscieniak, O.S.A. to St. John Stone Friary in Chicago to assist with the Community there.
Fr. John Arulthas, O.S.A. to Marylake Monastery in Canada.
Fr. Stephen Isley, O.S.A. to Cascia Hall in Tulsa, Oklahoma.
Fr. Don Lewandowski, O.S.A. to be Prior at St. Augustine Monastery in Tulsa.
Br. Jack Tierney, O.S.A. will spend his Pastoral Year at St. Nicholas of Tolentine Parish in Bronx, NY and serve at the United Nations.

There are also a couple of Friars who are temporarily in care facilities: Fr. Jerry Kneis, O.S.A. to Bellesini Friary in Crown Point for rehab from a broken leg, and Fr. Tony Pizzo, O.S.A. to Mercy Circle in Chicago after major surgery in his abdomen. Please pray for all of the Friars who are infirm or in transition. Change is never easy.

We ended the summer with a Formation Gathering in San Diego and Professions of new members. It is always positive and upbeat to be with our young men in formation!

Hope you had a great summer! I have some time to rest and relax with family and friends, and now we are back to full swing. We will soon begin the process to elect the next Provincial so please keep us in your prayers.

Sincerely in Christ and St. Augustine,

Fr. Bernie

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

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.
TODAY WE HAVE A NEW PRIEST:

The Ordination of Fr. Stephen Isley, O.S.A.

Fr. Stephen addresses the faithful at the conclusion of his Mass of Ordination at the Shrine of St. Rita Chapel on Saturday, June 17. Fr. Stephen returned to his home parish in Wichita to say Mass the following weekend.
On Saturday, June 17, Augustinian Fr. Stephen Isley was ordained to the priesthood at St. Rita Shrine Chapel, Chicago. The mass was celebrated by Bishop Daniel Turley, O.S.A., who traveled from his diocese of Chulucanas, Peru as he had earlier this year for Fr. Stephen’s diaconate Ordination.

Fr. Stephen, a native of Wichita, Kansas, first encountered the Augustinians as an undergraduate at the University of Tulsa when he visited the Cascia Hall Monastery looking for spiritual direction. At the close of the Mass of Ordination, Fr. Bernie Scianna, O.S.A. recalled his first meeting with Fr. Stephen: “I remember when Fr. Stephen came into my office in Tulsa, and he was looking for a spiritual director. I directed him to Fr. Ted Tack, O.S.A.. Stephen told Fr. Tack ‘I am here for some spiritual direction, but I’m not interested in joining the Order.’ And Tack said to us at dinner, ‘Yeah right. We know what he’s going to be, and he’s going to be an Augustinian and he’s going to be a priest.’ So Fr. Tack is shining down upon you today as your spiritual guide still.”

At the close of mass, Fr. Stephen also addressed the congregation, where he remarked on how long of a road his formation had been, since he first entered into the pre-novitiate program in 2009. At the time of Fr. Stephen’s first vows, we was the youngest member of the Augustinians by 20 years. Therefore, his Ordination is an important marker for how far the Order has come in the development of vocations in recent years.

Reflecting on his call to the priesthood the week before his ordination, Fr. Stephen said, “It’s not that God has called me out of the world to be a priest. Rather, God’s calling me back into the world to be a priest.”

He further explained, “God is calling me to serve at our schools, when we celebrate our masses, when we have confessions. To be there even for past students as they move into new chapters in life . . . and to offer those new ways of engaging and supporting the people that I have already developed a relationship with as an Augustinian and as a Brother.”

Since Fr. Stephen first encountered the Augustinians in Tulsa, it is fitting that he now returns to the community for his first assignment as teacher and school chaplain. "My passion, for as far back as I can remember, has been teaching," said Fr. Stephen, “Seeing that eureka moment in a student’s eyes: that’s always something I’ve really enjoyed.”

“A few years ago when I did have an experience [during my Pastoral Year] at Cascia Hall teaching, everything that I looked forward to, everything that I hoped teaching could be … was reaffirmed.” Fr. Stephen recalled, “I fell in love with communicating the things I found so powerful in my own life and wanted to share, and seeing that fire spread a little bit. It was incredible, and I’m very grateful to get the opportunity to get back to that experience.”
Convocation Gathers Augustinians from Across North America

At different times in the story of a religious family, you can hear the sounds of a new song being sung. Usually it is the first song, the one sung at the important moment of foundation. The melody can return through the years and want to be sung again, maybe in a new key and perhaps with updated lyrics. We still believe in that song.

Fr. Brian Lowery, O.S.A., evoked this new song on the evening of June 11, at the opening of a five-day gathering, a “Convocation,” of the Augustinians of North America. Held at the Villanova University campus, the convocation brought together the priests and brothers from the four North American provinces, together with the Augustinian Prior General Alejandro Anton Moral, O.S.A., who traveled from Rome for the event.

One of the points of discussion for the gathering, which takes place once every four years, was the possibility of uniting the East, Midwest, Canadian and West provinces in one united province. However, they decided to continue to collaborate as a federation. The gathering also allowed for Augustinian friars to hear from incoming Men in Formation about their calling to the Order and their own interpretation of Augustinian Restlessness. On Thursday evening, a Mass and the dinner which followed, honored friars whose anniversaries of profession and ordination occur in 2017. The Convocation ended on Friday with a late morning Mass celebrated by Vicar General Joseph Farrell, O.S.A., a member of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova.
Blessings in My First Year of Priesthood

By Fr. Richie Mercado O.S.A.

I made my solemn profession of vows to the Augustinian Order on the Feast of St. Monica in the year 2015. A little less than a year later, I was ordained to priesthood on June 10, 2016 by our dear brother, Bishop Robert F. Prevost, O.S.A. of Chiclayo, Peru at St. Rita of Cascia Parish in Chicago. These two important moments in my religious path as an Augustinian have changed my life tremendously, as various blessings and opportunities came with the commitment I made to God, the Church, and the Order.

After my ordination, I participated in the Augustinian Youth Encounter in Prague with so many friars around the world, who brough with them the restless hearts of young men and women from their own respective ministries—parishes, schools, and missions. And this was a great blessing for me as a newly ordained friar, learning how to touch other people’s hearts and, at the same time, learning how to allow others to touch my heart as we journey in one mind and one heart on the way to God.

During the course of the school year, I got to know a lot of our students. I got to know their stories. I got to know their families. This was a great blessing for me as a newly ordained friar, learning how to touch other people’s hearts and, at the same time, learning how to allow others to touch my heart as we journey in one mind and one heart on the way to God.

Aside from ministering to the whole St. Rita of Cascia High School family, I also helped out on weekends at several places administering masses and sacraments: St. Rita of Cascia Parish, St. Daniel the Prophet Parish, St. Joseph Parish, and St. Xavier University. My first full year in ministry as a priest was filled with lots of blessings and opportunities, both expected and unexpected. I had an awesome time growing and maturing as a shepherd to my sheep.

While all of this was going on with lots of fun and challenges, I also had other responsibilities in the Order and in the Province. After making my solemn profession of vows, I was appointed a member of the International Commission on Vocations in the Order with the recommendation and support of Fr. Bernie Scianna, O.S.A. my Provincial. With this, my knowledge and vision of the Augustinian Order grew expansively as I collaborated closely with the other members of the commission who are from different areas in the world.

This was a great blessing for me as an Augustinian friar as this experience continues to motivate me to share that embedded Augustinian Spirit in my heart to each and every person I encounter, wherever I may be. At the province level, Fr. Bernie and his council also appointed me as the Assistant Vocation Director for the province, to assist the vocation director who got me in to the Order eight years ago, Fr. Tom McCarthy, O.S.A.. This was another great blessing for me as this experience of journeying with those young men who are interested and open to God’s call for them in an Augustinian way of life has reminded me of the endless ways of touching other people’s hearts, of being the face of Christ to others. And just at the beginning of July 2017, I was appointed the Vocation Director for the Midwest and Canadian Province. This is another great blessing for me to continue touching other people’s hearts in a new capacity. With this new opportunity, I will still continue to be involved at St. Rita High School as the chaplain and take care of the spiritual needs of the students, faculty, and alumni.

My first full year of priesthood ministry has been filled with lots of blessings from God and opportunities to touch other people’s hearts. This positive experience for me has affirmed the promise of joy and peace that God gives us as long as we are authentic in following God’s call. May our restless hearts continue to touch other people’s hearts. With God’s grace, we have done a lot. With God’s grace, we can do a lot more.
Fr. Richie Mercado Leads Vocations Outreach After Fr. Tom's Departure

Even with the great success the Augustinian Order has seen in the recruitment of vocations over the past decade, the time has come for a change in leadership. Effective July 1, Fr. Richie Mercado, O.S.A. took over as the new Vocation Director for the Midwest and Canada, following the decision of Fr. Tom McCarthy, O.S.A. to step down from the position which he had held for nine years.

Fr. Richie has for the past two years served as the Assistant Director under Fr. Tom and also serves on the Order’s International Commission for Vocations. In his new position, Fr. Richie will make visits to Augustinian schools and parishes to speak to young men about discernment and will answer all contacts made by inquirers. Fr. Richie will continue to serve as Chaplain of St. Rita High School, which he began following his ordination last year.

Whereas Fr. Tom had served, since 2012, as the Director of Vocations for the Eastern, Canadian, and Midwest Provinces, the Eastern Province will now have a separate Director in Fr. Joe Narog, O.S.A.. Fr. Tom will continue to be a presence on the Villanova campus is his newly designed position as Augustinian Advisor for First and Second-Year Initiatives.

In his tenure as Director of Vocations, Fr. Tom has overseen and helped bring about a new culture of Augustinian vocations that will bear fruits for decades to come. Beginning his position at a time when the Order had not ordained a new priest in decades, Fr. Tom helped develop a class of 40 men in formation, a number the Order hadn’t seen in four decades. Our Augustinian schools and parishes will bear the mark of his tenure for generations.

"I never thought I would ever be the Augustinian Vocation Director. I never thought, after nine years as Vocation Director, I would be saying how blessed I have been because of this ministry. And blessed I am” said Fr. Tom.

"Thanks to all who have supported me and my team in this ministry. Thanks to all the young men who have discerned with us over the last nine years. Most of all, thanks to my Augustinian Brothers I have had the privilege to walk with as they have joined our Order. You are our future and because of you, our future is very good! Remember, we are all vocation directors and I will always be one myself!"

In order to ensure continued successes, Fr. Tom will remain in an advisory role to Fr. Richie, and he will continue to give his highly regarded parish missions, which reach countless men in the process of discernment. While the Eastern and Midwest Provinces will now have separate Vocation Directors, we will continue to share the Secretary of Vocations Office, Mrs. Bernadette DiLucido, and Website Director Sean Reynolds in the Midwest Office.

L-R: Fr. Stephen Isley, O.S.A.; Fr. Rich Young, O.S.A.; Fr. Tom McCarthy, O.S.A.; Fr. Richie Mercado, O.S.A.; Br. Joe Ruiz, O.S.A.
On Saturday, August 5 the Order of St. Augustine received the solemn profession of vows from Brs. Nicholas Porter, O.S.A. and Philip Yang, O.S.A., both of whom belong to the Western Province. The Mass of Profession was held at Founder’s Chapel on the campus of the University of San Diego.

Also professing their temporary vows were four men who had finished their novitiate year at the Bl. Stephen Bellesini Friary in Racine Wisconsin: Brs. Arturo Renteria, O.S.A. and Mauricio Morales, O.S.A., from the Western Province; and Brs. William Gabriel, O.S.A. and Jeremy Hiers, O.S.A., from the Eastern Province. Br. William and Br. Jeremy will begin their studies at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago this Fall.

Temporary professions of vows obligate friars to the Augustinian Order for a term of one year, and friars will renew their vows yearly until they make their solemn, lifelong profession of vows. In North America, it has become customary—though not obligatory—for novices to wear white habits and then change over to the black habits following their first profession of vows.

Lastly, Fr. John Arulthas, O.S.A., who will be joining the Marylake community in Canada, made a symbolic renewal of his vows, and reaffirmed his commitment to the Augustinian life. Fr. John has joined the Augustinians after transferring from the Rosarian Order, with which he had already made his perpetual vows.

Currently on the Midwest Augustinian website you can watch a moving 3-minute video of Augustinian friars from across the country coming together in San Diego just ahead of the Mass of profession. “I am getting ready basically to tie the knot,” said Philip Yang, “I am getting married to this Order that will serve God and God’s people.”

The full video of the Mass of Profession is also available for viewing at the YouTube channel “Augustinian Vocations.” We apologize to those who had tuned in to watch the live broadcast of the Profession on August 5. Due to an unforeseeable loss of internet connection, the live stream was interrupted and could not recover. Fortunately we still have the full video for you to enjoy!
It was with a heavy heart that the Midwest Augustinian Provincial Council made the decision to move Fr. Joe McCormick, O.S.A. from his pastoral service at St. Ann Parish and Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Michigan. With this transfer, the Augustinians no longer have an active priest or parish in the state of Michigan.

In a farewell Mass on July 2, the parishioners of Our Lady of the Lake in Edwardsburg presented Fr. Joe with a plaque in gratitude for his 11 years of service. It will hang permanently in the church.

Bishop Paul J. Bradley of the Kalamazoo Diocese wrote in his letter of acknowledgement:

This transfer also represents the end of an era of cooperation and collaboration with the Augustinian Community in building up the Church in southwest Michigan. Our Diocese (and those predecessor Diocese even before our establishment in 1971) has benefited greatly from those very many priests and brothers who have served the needs of the Faithful here with such distinction and dedication over these many years.

In a very particular way, I want to express my deep gratitude for the particular contributions Father McCormick has made over the 11 years he has served here in our Diocese. He has been a good priest and excellent pastor to those he was sent to serve. Most especially, he truly built up Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Edwardsburg, and was willing to take on an expansion of his responsibilities by being one of the first of our pastors to form a Collaborative as he assumed the pastorate of St. Ann Parish in Cassopolis when the pastor retired two years ago, and has helped to breathe new life into that parish community. He has always been honest and forthright in sharing his concerns and suggestions with me, and he has been a loving shepherd to his people. Needless to say, he will be sorely missed by his parishes and by his brother priests here in the Diocese.

Bp. Bradley has left the door open to the Augustinians to return in the future, should more priests become available. This is certainly a possibility considering the new wealth of vocations the Order is receiving. Fr. Joe has now taken over the leadership as the Pastor of the St. Bernard Parish in Homer Glen, IL. With the addition of St. Bernard, the Augustinians now serve three parishes within the Diocese of Joliet, together with Providence Catholic High School. At the 11:30 Mass on Sunday, September 10, Fr. Joe will be officially installed as Pastor at St. Bernard.
Two Priests Ordained for
Three Peruvian Augustinians were recently joined to the Church’s ordained ministries, two to the priesthood and one to the diaconate. The ordinations took place in the parish church in Morropon, one of the parishes ministered to by the Augustinians, with Bishop Dan Turley, O.S.A. presiding. Through his laying on of hands, the church received these new “Good Shepheds” of the Lord’s flock.

It was a moment of celebration just two months after Morropon suffered greatly from the torrential rains and flooding at the end of March this year. All three of the newly ordained come from families very devoted to their faith with long histories of collaborating in their respective parishes. Here is a short description of where their vocations were first nurtured:

Fr. Yhony Cordova, O.S.A. comes from the mountain town of Santo Domingo. Santo Domingo is in the lower part of the Andes rising to about 5,000 ft above sea-level. It was a parish that was attended to by the first Augustinian missionaries who arrived there in the 1960’s until 1983 when at the request of the bishop, John McNabb, O.S.A. they left to take responsibility for a more remote mountain parish in Paçiapampa.

Yhony’s dad was the parish sacristan during all the years that the Augustinians ministered in Santo Domingo so his deep faith was transmitted to his son, along with a special appreciation of the spirituality that marked the Augustinian charism and the pastoral program that they promoted all those years in Santo Domingo.

Although the Augustinians had long since left the parish, the family still remembered that extra special mark that they had left on the people of Santo Domingo, and this was one of the chief factors in Fr. Yhony discerning his vocation with the Augustinians.

As mentioned above, the Augustinians left Santo Domingo to head further into the Andes mountains to the most remote region of Paçiapampa. To get there one crosses the high point of the northern Peruvian Andes, (which at 8,000 ft. is much lower than the southern Peruvian Andes), and then head toward a valley where the town of Paçiapampa sits.

The parish is immense with over 100 villages spread over a remote and difficult terrain. It was there that the father of Fr. Martin Arriaza, O.S.A. the second one ordained to the priesthood, came into contact with the first Augustinians and he served many years as the parish secretary. Similar to the family history of Yhony, the closeness of Martin’s dad to the day to day life of the Augustinians made him particularly appreciative of the spirit and charism of the Order, and once again this appreciation proved fertile ground to fortify the seed of vocation in the heart of his son, Martin.

The third person Dn. Falu Benites, O.S.A. was ordained a deacon in the same mass. His mother was a long time eucharistic minister in her parish in Chulucanas. Dn. Falu also has a nephew in the diocesan seminary of Trujillo. Dn. Falu came to the order after finishing his studies in Veterinary science in the National University in Piura, some 50 miles from Chulucanas. Because of his mother’s close ties to the parish he had a sound foundation of faith that allowed his vocation to likewise take root and grow.

The three newly ordained were assigned to different parishes where their presence was badly needed. Fr. Yhony was assigned to San Jose Obrero parish in Chulucanas, the first parish founded by the Villanova province Augustinians in 1968. Dn. Falu was assigned to the Morropon parish which was the first parish assumed by the Midwest province Augustinians in 1964, and Fr. Martin was assigned to the parish of Pacasmayo, which along with its school, is the newest of the Augustinian apostolates in Peru.

By Fr. John Lydon, O.S.A.
\textbf{No! Not interested!} Not right now.

I want to help, but cannot do so now. I need more information.

By Michael Gerrity

Those of us - be it an Augustinian, a volunteer, or staff – who advocate for the Midwest Augustinians, and seek to raise the funds necessary to support them, are accustomed to all forms of the “no” answer. To secure the support required we must ask (in writing, by phone, or in person) over 12,000 times a year. Most of the time the answer is some form of a “no.” That does not daunt us; because we do it for Christ and the Augustinians.

What about you – the donor and supporter? Please rest assured that we never call on you without first realizing that you may have a lot on your mind – your family, business, work, health, parish work, and all those concerns and obligations that daily fill each of our hearts. So, we make every effort to treat you with the utmost respect, care, and courtesy, and to place your needs and concerns above our own.

Why do we persist? While we constantly balance the need to seek support and ask, along with your own needs and concerns, we press on for the Augustinians. Why? Because thousands of people are counting on us and on you. They are the retired and infirm Augustinians who have given their entire lives to service, the young men studying to become Augustinians, our vocations outreach program, the thousands of rural poor we serve in Northern Peru, and, the tens of thousands of men, women, and children who rely upon the service of the Augustinians in schools, parishes, and chaplaincies, in Chicago, Tulsa, Joliet, and many communities across the Midwest United States.

Our titles may differ, but in the end, each of us who seek support are sincere, committed mission advocates for the Midwest Augustinians. We warmly welcome those who join us in prayer, with their gifts, and with their volunteering, as our fellow mission advocates.

\textit{Meet the Midwest Augustinian Advancement Staff}

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  \item \textbf{Missions Coordinator} \n  \ \ \ Karon Basile
  \item \textbf{Advancement Associate} \n  \ \ \ Mary Gal Carroll
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  \item \textbf{Advancement Assistant} \n  \ \ \ Anne Russell
\end{itemize}
Restless Hearts Society

Your Last Statement: What Will God Think?

By Michael Gerrity

I was speaking to a donor a while back about bequests. Along with children and grandchildren, he was thinking of placing his parish and the Augustinians in his will. His wife, who was also present, was considering doing the same. They were both smart enough to know to have separate wills as well as two other powerful tools—a power of attorney and a healthcare proxy.

During our brief meeting he confided that he was concerned that his spouse, children, relatives, the lawyer, and others be content with his will. His wife had some of the same concerns. During our conversation he explained that their children did not necessarily accept all of the parent’s beliefs and values. My only response to those very real concerns was to be honest and candid with them and himself about what was the “truly right thing” to do. I also asked them to consider this question—“What will God think?” Their initial perplexed looks turned into smiles. They understood that their wills are their last statement to God about the stewardship of all He had given them during their lives. For all the good things came from God. Why would God who counts the hairs on one’s head and knows if a sparrow falls, not also watch what each person does with the final distribution of their earthly wealth and goods?

If you consider naming the Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel in your will or estate plans, a gift of $42,000 educates a man in formation for a year or covers the annual cost of one retired or infirm priest or brother. Just $21,000 does the same thing for six months. Such a gift pleases God and creates an everlasting legacy of love and service. It is certainly something worthy of some considerable thought and prayer.

For more information, please contact Michael Gerrity at michael@midwestaugustinians.org or at 773-595-4035. Your inquiry is treated confidentially and with discretion.

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  Richard Hagedorn  Debra Molinari
Joe Bamberger  Michael C. Kirby  Thomas J. Moore
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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 126 donors that began donating between May 20 and August 10. We ask that all our readers keep these newest supporters in prayer.

Please note this is not a list of all donors from this period, but only those making their first donation to the Midwest Augustinians. If you feel your contribution is not properly reflected in this report, we apologize and ask you to contact the Advancement Office at advancement@midwestaugustinians.org at 773-595-4008.

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