

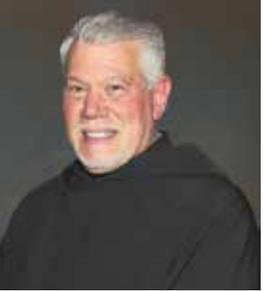


FALL/WINTER 2019

# The Midwest Augustinian

SPECIAL  
ISSUE

**AUGUSTINIANS  
IN ITALY**



# LETTER FROM THE PRIOR PROVINCIAL

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE AUGUSTINIANS,

Winter has come upon us fast this year! Here in Chicago we had record October snows. For that reason many of us may have felt rushed into the Christmas season, teetering between excitement and anxiety as our calendars fill up with office parties, school plays, and family visits.

As my own December calendar makes very clear to me, I am a member of quite a few families: my relatives here in Chicago, my parish, my Midwest Province, and my Augustinian brotherhood across the world! As an Italian American in Chicago, my family, heritage, and ancestry has always been very important to me. I can trace my family back generations and have visited the towns where they lived. As an Augustinian, I also have another very real network of roots, that lead back to our foundation in Rome and on back to the Bishop of Milan, St. Augustine. This September I had the opportunity to immerse myself in the depth and beauty of that lineage during the Augustinian General Chapter in Rome, where over 100 friars from 60 different countries of origin came together.

I am thrilled to present this *very special issue* to you, which not only reports on the events of our Chapter, but, hopefully, will help you better see the context of our Province within the Augustinian Order, and allow you to see the presence and lineage of the our family throughout Italy. We have never had an issue like this before!

I had still deeper reason to consider family during the Archdiocese of Chicago's 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting for immigrant children held in detention centers, together with a number of Augustinians and members of our Chicago parishes. The motto for this fast perfectly encapsulated our motivation: "They're All Our Children." Indeed the children being held in these detention centers are our children—just as much as the Samaritan was the neighbor of the man on the road to Jerusalem.

I am very glad to be part of your family this Christmas, and I also ask for your continued prayers for me and the rest of our Province leadership.

God's Blessings to All,

Very Reverend Anthony B. Pizzo, O.S.A.

*Prior Provincial of the Midwest, Canada, and Chulucanas, Peru*

*The Midwest Augustinian is a publication of the Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel. For additional copies, or to unsubscribe, please contact the Province Office:*

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# Augustinians Meet



On the first day of September, the Curia of the Augustinian Order opened their 186th General Chapter with an inaugural Mass at St. Augustine's Basilica in Rome. This gathering also marked the 775th Anniversary of the Order's foundation, when Pope Innocent IV united the Augustinian Order at the Basilica of Santa Maria del Popolo. As a testament to the Order's abiding missionary charism over the centuries, this chapter called together 80 delegate friars who represented 49 geographical regions and 63 different countries of origin.

"The General Chapter is the time to help each friar of the Order to reaffirm and deepen their own Augustinian vocation, to create elements of personal and community renewal," said chief celebrant Prior General Alejandro Moral Antón, O.S.A., in his opening homily.

In its current form, the General Chapter is a three-week meeting held every six years and located primarily at the General Curia of the Augustinians, which faces the southern colonnade of St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. Over the course of these three weeks, the provinces update one another on their progress, vote on their leadership, ratify governing documents, and tend to the general promotion of "the common welfare of all the friars" (*Rule and Constitution*)

Vicar General Joe Farrell, O.S.A., the President of the Chapter, pointed out in his opening address that the delegate friars overcame large distances, language barriers, and frequent visa troubles to unite under a single purpose: "There are many stories that make up the tapestry of who we are . . . And yet, amidst all the diversity of stories we have a certain characteristic that makes us Augustinians: 'The main purpose for



# in Rome for 186th General Chapter

your coming together is to live harmoniously in your house, intent upon God in oneness of mind and heart.”

Of most immediate importance to the future of the Order was the election of a Prior General and his subsequent appointment of an advisory council. At the open of the second week, the delegates re-elected Fr. Alejandro, the native of Spain, for a second 6-year term, with 61 of the 79 votes going to the incumbent Prior. For his council, Fr. Alejandro sought to bring in advisors representative of the Order’s global presence: Vicar General Joe Farrell, O.S.A., of the Villanova Province; Fr. Anthony Banks, O.S.A., of Australia; Fr. Luis Marín de San Martín, O.S.A., of Spain; Fr. Edward Delang, O.S.A., of Nigeria; Fr. Paul Graham, O.S.A., of England; and Fr. Alexander Lam, O.S.A., of Peru. The General Council, together with the Prior General, form what is called the General Curia (from the Latin for care). The General Curia is charged with overseeing the unity and administration of the Order throughout its 52 geographical circumscriptions.

Summarized below are reports from the General Chapter that may be of interest to our readers:

- Through growth and administrative consolidation, three new Augustinian Provinces were formed: The Province of San Juan de Sahagún, a merger of the four Spanish provinces; the Province of the Philippines of the Orient, an offshoot of the Province of the Philippines; and the Province of Our Lady of the Consolation of Brazil, offshoot of the Madrid Province. Further, the delegation approved the formation of new vicariates in Tanzania and Kenya.

- Br. Zhang Hu Yao, O.S.A. of China shared with the assembly the encouraging news of the Augustinians mission outreach into China. Bishop Robert Prevost, O.S.A., explained, “The remnants of a former mission and the beginnings of the new one have been [in China] all along and there is now a solemnly professed Chinese of a new generation, [Br. Zhang,] who hopefully will soon be going back to China and we will see another new area for growth for the order there. There are millions of Catholics in China. It’s a huge area open for evangelization.”

- Due to dwindling number of active friars, the Province of St. Joseph in Canada has been suppressed, and absorbed wholly into the Midwest Augustinian Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel.

- The Order used this occasion to promote the recognition of St. Thomas of Villanova as a Doctor of the Church “for his spiritual, doctrinal, and pastoral contributions.” As the Prior Generals of the Augustinians, Augustinian Recollects and Discalced Augustinians had done in April of this year, the Chapter participants delivered a signed petition to Pope Francis at the private audience granted on the morning of September 13.



# AUGUSTINIANS IN ROME

*Though many religious orders have their headquarters near the Vatican, the relationship of the Augustinians with the Holy See has always been of great importance, as we are one of the few orders that does not have a specific historical founder. While Saint Augustine is our spiritual founder, our historical foundation came through the initiative of the Roman Curia. As the Augustinian Order has grown in membership and expanded the reach of its missions, Rome continues to serve as the center for leadership and an expression of the abiding Unity of our spiritual family.*



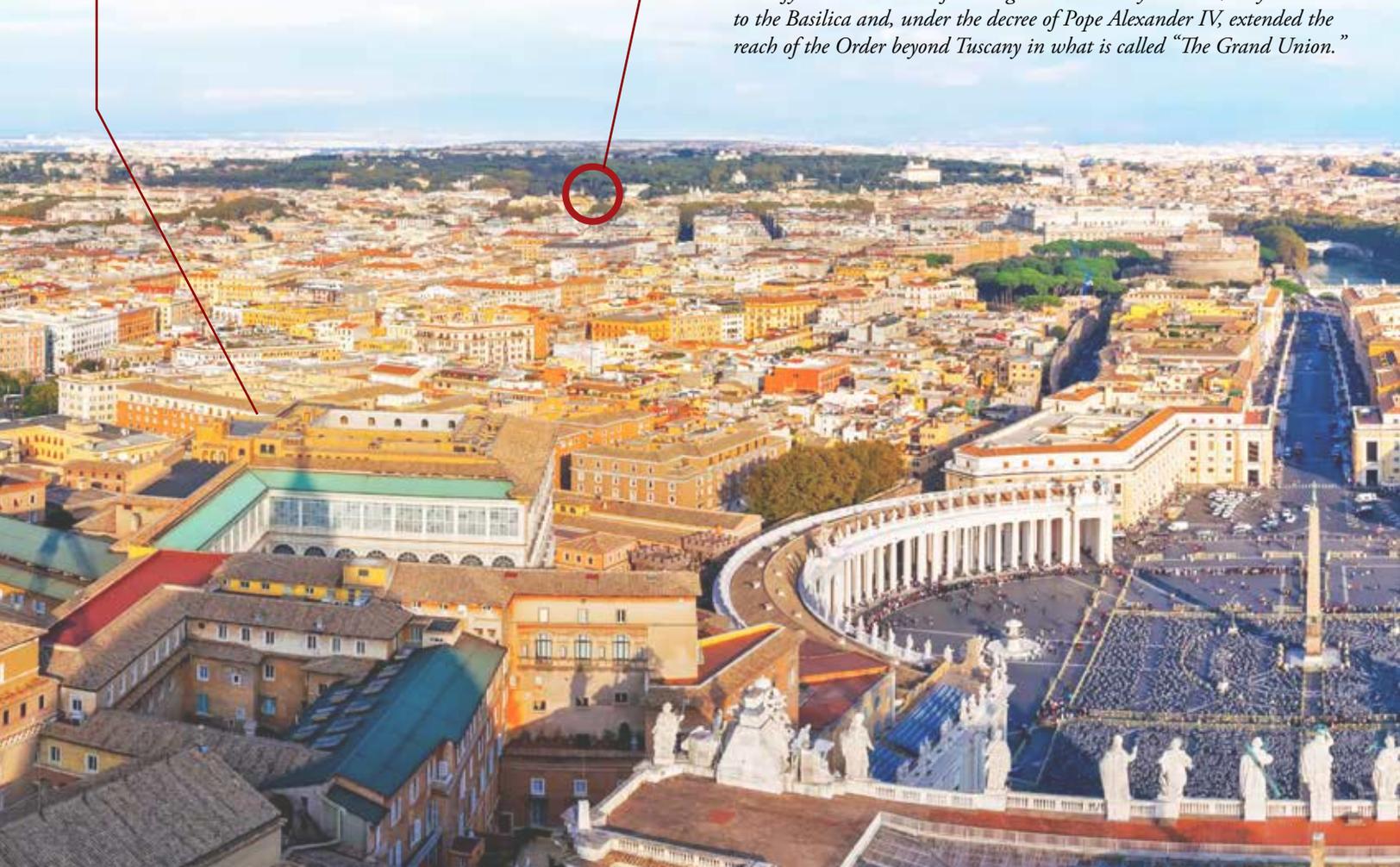
## The Parish of Sant'Anna

*Located along the eastern walls, the Parish of Sant'Anna was formally entrusted to the care of the Augustinian Order by Pope Pius XI in 1929.*



## The Basilica of Santa Maria del Popolo

*A little over a mile east from St. Peter's Basilica lies the true birthplace of the Augustinians—the Basilica of Santa Maria del Popolo. In 1244, the hermits of Tuscany convoked here at the invitation of Pope Innocent IV to unify under the Rule of St. Augustine. Twelve years later, they returned to the Basilica and, under the decree of Pope Alexander IV, extended the reach of the Order beyond Tuscany in what is called "The Grand Union."*





## The Basilica & Convent of St. Augustine

*Across the Tiber, near the bustling Piazza Navona, you will find tucked away the Basilica and Convent of St. Augustine, which served for many centuries as the home of the Augustinian General Curia. In the 16th century, the Basilica was greatly expanded and restored, while a large section of the convent was given over to the creation of the Biblioteca Angelica (the first public library in Europe). In the late 19th century, however, the Basilica, Convent, and library were confiscated by the state and the community of friars was expelled. Though the Augustinians were later invited to return, the Basilica and Convent remain property of the government. Many pilgrims also visit the Basilica to pray before the mortal remains of St. Monica.*

## The Papal Sacristy

*Dating back almost to the founding of the Order, an Augustinian has always been appointed to the position of Papal Sacristan. Pope Alexander VI formally granted the Order with the care of the sacristy in 1497.*

## The Augustinian General Curia

*Exit from the southern colonnade of St. Peter's onto the Via Paolo VI and you will see the entrance to the current Augustinian General Curia—home to the Prior General and General Counsel, the Collegio Santa Monica, and the Augustinian Patristic Institute. Following the government seizure of the Convent of St. Augustine, the Augustinian General Commissary purchased this small villa in 1882 to serve as the new center of the Order. Also transferred was an international community of professors and friars in initial formation, which a few years later expanded into what is now the Collegio Santa Monica. In the southeast corner of the campus is the Augustinian Patristic Institute, inaugurated by Pope Paul VI on the Feast of St. Monica, 1970.*





## 40th Anniversary Homily of the Prior Provincial

**T**he Very Rev. Tony Pizzo, O.S.A. was able to celebrate his 40th Anniversary of Profession in a truly blessed way, as he was invited to say Mass on the morning of the first Monday of the Augustinian General Chapter in Rome. The Mass was held on September 2 at the Chapel of St. Monica at the Augustinian General Curia. Included here is a shortened version of the homily he presented to an audience of over 80 Augustinian friars:

*I am grateful to God for my Augustinian vocation and for the gift of Priesthood! I have identified myself with the Order for 40 years now (today) when I temporarily committed myself to the Church through the Order then discerned my solemn commitment 3 years later. It was through this discerning spirit that I came to know and love Jesus Christ through the Augustinian spirit of fraternity and friendship. The Order gives me the opportunity to see God's face among people that, initially, didn't fit into my limited world.*

*We begin together to widen our perspectives in this grace filled time of discussions and deliberations on how to strengthen our mission in the Church overall. What a grace it is to be here as we represent the Order in all its diversity.*

*The Gospel of Luke has already set the stage for Jesus' Mission. The Holy Spirit has descended on him and moves him forward. Now, in the power of the Spirit, Jesus begins his work (and so do we for this General Chapter 2019). Today's Gospel indicates that Jesus begins his public ministry by proclaiming release to captives and the oppressed. In the presence of his listeners, He announces that today—the prophecy of Isaiah has been fulfilled, and the year of the Lord's favor has come. We appeal to the Lord as well that His favor rest with us during this grace filled time.*

*The opening words of Jesus' sermon text recall his baptism: The Spirit of the Lord has anointed him . . . And he has been anointed for a purpose. What he preaches today will be the theme of his whole ministry. Jesus' Mission is defined by bringing good news, forgiveness and healing as well as inviting those who feel alienated and whose lives are broken due to the nature of our sinful condition. He preaches freedom and transformation.*

*When Jesus proclaims good news to the poor, it isn't just a metaphor. Jesus' concern for those who suffer the crushing effects of poverty, separation and abuse of power is repeated throughout Luke's Gospel. Jesus does not separate economics from spirituality either. The salvation that Jesus brings embraces the whole person, spirit, soul and body. . . Why? Because God desires us to be made whole from the brokenness we suffer.*



Today, in order to accept his teaching, Jesus reminds his listeners they will have to change their attitudes toward outsiders, that God's love extends beyond their borders, they would have to include people they routinely exclude. They would have to believe that God's salvation is really for all flesh, and not just for the few. We have been anointed to create a new community that breaks down the barriers between insider and outsider, that all flesh shall see God's salvation.

Perhaps the most disturbing part of this passage is that Jesus does not do any miracles in his hometown. Why should they not receive some benefit from Jesus' ministry? Yet this very sense of being disturbed can be a helpful pointer in our lives together in community and our service to the Church. Do we feel entitled to the work of Jesus among us? Do we feel entitled in our leadership roles? Or, do we share in Jesus' approach to ministry as a mission of service?

We are restless due to so much to think about and so much to accomplish because at times, the Mission doesn't fit into our expectations nor do we fit into one another's expectations. I have learned that the best way to deal with these challenging facets of community life and ministry is to simply "do good and forget about it." It is a struggle to let go of our ego in favor of attending to the needs of the brother (or sister).

This restless nature of our lives expresses itself well in how we relate to one another, the continuous struggle to search for God and to see the face of Christ. If we see each other as another problem to solve then we reduce one another as something other than human and this is dangerous. But when we see each other as another opportunity to see the face of Christ even in our woundedness . . . a kind word, a gentle gesture, a listening heart and the generous nature of our personal goodness, it makes all that we do worth it because we are contributing to the Mission of Christ as we accentuate the dignity of one another and move toward wholeness.



## Here reads the 1243 Papal Bull issued by Pope Innocent IV to the Hermits of Tuscany, calling them to unite in a single religious Order:

*Innocent Bishop, servant of servants of God.*

*Dear Hermit sons through Tuscia, except the friars of Saint Willian, Greetings, etc.*

*It is Our duty, in virtue of the responsibility of the pastoral office, to establish religious orders and promote them once established and, insofar as it depends on Us, to confirm all and each of them in their pious intention, lest deprived of our apostolic favor, they fail to make progress in the work begun, but instead decline or grow tepid.*

*Our beloved sons, the hermit brothers Stephen, Hugo, Guidus, and Peter, have carefully explained your way of life to Us. Since we are unwilling to have you roam like straying sheep who wander without a shepherd in the tracks of the flocks, we order all of you by this apostolic writing to adopt the Rule and way of life of Blessed Augustine and profess that you will henceforth live accordingly. You may, however, draw upon your own observances or constitutions, provided these do not conflict with the principles of the said way of life. You will likewise take steps to acquire a suitable prior general by means of a canonical election; you are then to obey him and show him due reverence. If any difficulties arise in regard to the foregoing mandates, you are to apply to Our beloved son Richard, cardinal deacon of Sant'Angelo, whom we have appointed your judge and provider.*

*Given at Lateran XVII Kalends January, in the first year of our pontificate.*

# Where does the Midwest Province fit within



## GENERAL CURIA

Though divided among countries, circumscriptions, and houses, all Augustinian friars belong to one religious family, which is served and overseen by the General Curia. Membership of the Curia is comprised of a Prior General, along with the Secretary, Treasurer, Procurator and Assistant Generals. These leadership roles are filled by a rotation of elected friars in 6-year terms. Every vow professed by an Augustinian, no matter the Province, is made to the Prior General, who is considered the head of the worldwide family. The word “Curia” means “one who takes care of”; thus the Prior General and his Council serve to guard the history and spirituality of the Order, while ensuring that every Augustinian has the support he needs.

## FEDERATION OF AUGUSTINIANS OF NORTH AMERICA

The Augustinian Order is broken down into 47 geographical circumscriptions. In North America there are three Provinces (East, Midwest, and West), which united into a **Federation** in 2010. Under the Augustinian Constitution, Federations are to be formed by the Prior General for the purpose of increasing collaboration in ministry and consolidating administrative and leadership roles. Federations have an elected President who assumes some of the leadership responsibilities for the multiple Provinces, though he makes no direct ministerial appointments.

# the Order of Saint Augustine worldwide?



## THE MIDWEST PROVINCE OF OUR MOTHER OF GOOD COUNSEL

The Prior General serves approximately 2,500 friars throughout the world. Given the differing conditions faced by friars of different regions and ministries, the Order is broken up into regional **Provinces**, each with its own leadership. Each Province is directed and served by an elected Prior Provincial and Provincial Council. The duty of the Prior Provincial is to make individual appointments, preserve the unity and spiritual well-being of friars, and cultivate new vocations.



### HOUSES

Where three or more friars share a common daily life in a single place a **House of the Order** should be formed. Within these houses the true heart of community life is manifested. Over the past decade, the Midwest Province has included 8 to 10 houses.

## VICARIATE IN PERU

A **Vicariate** is formed under the direction of a Province in a region with at least 20 friars, where there is sufficient reason to hope that a Province may be developed. A regional Vicar is appointed as the superior to make assignments, cultivate vocations, and manage expenses.





photo: Vatican News

# Pope Francis Addresses Augustinians: *Be Witnesses to the “Contagious Charity of the Church”*

**T**he Augustinian delegate friars met with Pope Francis early Friday morning within the Vatican, where the Pontiff exhorted the them to live out their call to fraternal charity rooted in God:

“You Augustinians have been called to witness to that warm, living, visible, contagious charity of the Church, through a community life that clearly manifests the presence of the Risen One and His Spirit.”

The foremost opportunity to live out this charity, he added, comes within the context of community life. He emphasized that while the Augustinian way of life is rooted in a shared spiritual experience, our most important experiences of charity come in the “small everyday things” that make up communal living.

He appealed back to his 2018 Apostolic Exhortation, *Gaudete et exsultate*, where he invokes the story of Augustine and St. Monica in Ostia to show that “a community that cherishes the little details of love, whose members care for one another and create an open and evangelizing environment, is a place where the risen Lord is present, sanctifying it in accordance with the Father’s plan.”

While the charism of fraternal charity takes place within and among Augustinian communities, it is intended to reach outward to “show God living to the world.” The importance of fraternal love is all the more important, the Pontiff claimed, in the midst of scandals such as the one the Church now faces.

He appealed back to a letter of St. Augustine to St. Jerome, where our Holy Father described his experience of community: “Upon the love of such friends I readily cast myself without reservation, especially when chafed and wearied by the scandals of this world; and in their love I rest without any disturbing care: for I perceive that God is there.”

In his closing, he invoked the description of Augustinian fraternity as a “prophetic sign,” which is found in our Constitution. He added that, in order for this fraternal love to reach beyond our communities, it must begin with a love for Christ’s cross: “The cross is the measure of love, always. It is true that one can love without a cross, when there is no cross, but when there is a cross, the way in which I take up the cross is the measure of love. That is how it is.”

The entirety of the Pope’s address is available on our Province website.



# Our *Pellegrinaggio* through Italy

Over the summer, four of our newly solemnly professed Augustinian friars went on the traditional *pellegrinaggio*, or pilgrimage, to Italy. Led by the Post-Novitiate Director, Fr. Joe Mostardi, O.S.A., the friars paid visit to many sites of importance in the life of St. Augustine, the history of the Augustinian Order, and the early days of the Catholic Church. Availing themselves of the hospitality of local Augustinian friaries and monasteries, our North American friars were also able to develop a greater sense of the international character of the Order.

Their stops included San Gimignano, Milano and nearby Pavia, Montefalco, Cascia, the Vatican, Tolentino, Siena, the Shrine of Our Mother of Good Counsel in Genazzano, and Ostia Antica, which was the major port of Rome where St. Augustine both arrived from and returned to Africa after his conversion. Far more than just sight-seeing, these travels were structured around a four-day spiritual retreat intended to prepare friars for their entry into active ministry. This year's retreat asked the friars to enter into a focused contemplation of the story of Christ's appearance to the apostles on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-15).

In recognition of our deep gratitude to and communion with all our supporters, we wish to take you on a tour of a few sites, through the eyes of four Augustinian pilgrims: Br. Sarfraz Alam, O.S.A.; Br. Jack Tierney, O.S.A.; Br. Adnan Ghani, O.S.A.; and Br. Daniel Madden, O.S.A.

# San Gimignano: learning the roots of our new family



photo: Horvath Botond

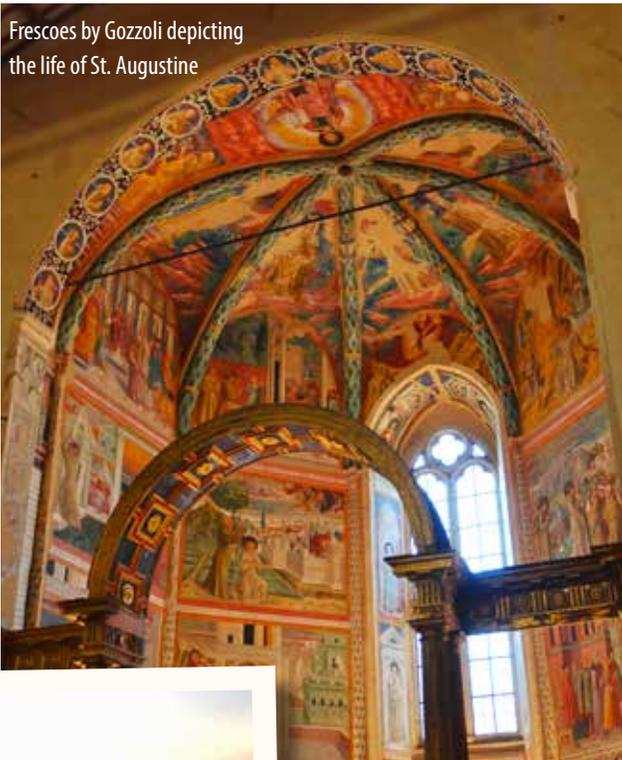
*The thirteenth-century Convent of St. Augustine, located inside the walls of the historic town of San Gimignano, served as our home base for five days, as we delved deep into the roots of the Order throughout Tuscany. (This included day trips to Florence, Siena, and Lecetto.) Any reflection on San Gimignano has to begin with the breathtaking scenery of the town's well-preserved stone towers, the rolling vineyards, and fields of saffron. It truly invited me to reflect on the wonders of God.*

*The Convent of St. Augustine also represents one of the oldest continuous Augustinian communities, as it was built just a few decades after our founding. Attached to the convent is the Church of St. Augustine, which houses what is probably the most important artwork to our Order: the frescoes of Benozzo Gozzoli depicting the life of St. Augustine of Hippo. The days spent in this convent were filled with stories about the history of the friars who live there and their contributions to the Church. As I walked around that very old monastery and church I was realizing these are not dead people. These are the people who still accompany us, and they, through their life experiences, help us to understand what it means to be an accompaniment to people through our ministry.*

*Less than a mile outside of San Gimignano are the ruins of the oldest Hermitage of the Augustinians, which we were able to visit together. Only the walls of the house and church are remaining, but you are still able to walk the paths of these hermits and experience a sense of union. What struck me was how difficult a life it was for them, having to go through so much effort just to bring water to their home. All of this was like learning the lineage of my new family. Personally, I can trace my own genetic family back four generations in India. That informs who I am. However, this showed me a new family; these are my new, Augustinian ancestors. In that way, seeing San Gimignano helped me learn about myself.*



By Br. Sarfraz Alam, O.S.A.



Frescoes by Gozzoli depicting the life of St. Augustine



Convent of St. Augustine in San Gimignano

Construction of the Convent of Saint Augustine began along the northern walls of San Gimignano in 1280, after residents invited in a nearby community of hermits, who had found themselves too often the prey of travelling marauders.\* On Mar 31, 1298 the convent, along with the Church of St. Augustine, was consecrated by Cardinal Matteo d'Acquasparta. It has continuously housed Augustinian friars ever since, except for a lapse of 64 years when it was seized by the Italian army and used as barracks. During World War II, the tunnels beneath the convent offered refuge to the residents of San Gimignano, and it became their *de facto* air raid shelter through the bombardments of 1944.

The Church of St. Augustine, facing out to a piazza of the same name, has a humble brick facade with a single Gothic oculus above a small wooden door. The interior, however, features one of the true gems of the Order: a series of 17 frescoes depicting the life of St. Augustine by Benozzo Gozzoli. From 1461 to 1464, the famous Florentine painter lived in the convent with the friars while he completed the series, which adorns the walls of the choir behind the altar, where daily prayer was once held.

*\*Much of the appended information on pages 15, 17, and 20 was sourced from a pellegrinaggio guidebook compiled by Fr. Jim Wenzel, O.S.A. and printed in 2006.*



Church of St. Augustine in San Gimignano

photo: andrzej2012



Frescoes in Lecreto depicting early friars (photo courtesy of AugNet.org)



Augustinian hermitage in Lecreto (photo courtesy of AugNet.org)

The hermitage in Lecreto, just outside of Siena, dates back to the decades just prior to the formation of the Augustinian Order. In the inner cloister, a series of frescoes depict legends of the lives of past eremitic Augustinians, who were known to retreat for long periods in the caves a beyond the boundaries of the monastery. The monastery was abandoned in the Napoleonic era and subsequently fell into disrepair. In the early 1970s, the hermitage was partially restored and became home to a community of cloistered Augustinian nuns.

# Milan & Pavia: renewing our baptism with St. Augustine

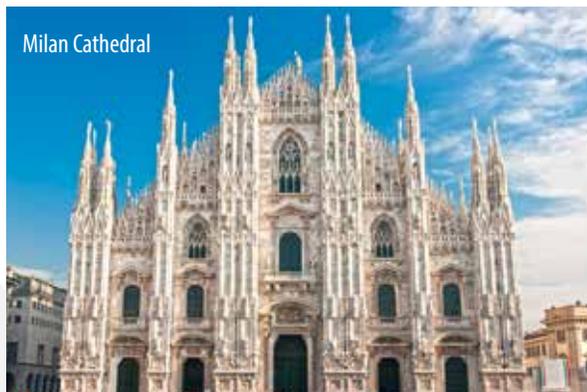


photo: Luciano Mortula-LGM



*Our northernmost stops were in Lombardy, beginning in Pavia, where we visited the Augustinian community at San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro; St. Peter in the Golden Sky. This is the Church where Augustine of Hippo's relics are currently reserved for veneration.*

*The main altar is a huge stone relief depicting scenes in Augustine's life. Beneath the altar, a large box is visible which contains his remains. We celebrated Mass for the intention of Augustinians, our parents, Affiliates, and all the benefactors of the Order. Around the altar are candles representing each Province of the Order of St. Augustine; a living sign of unity around the tomb of our Holy Father.*

*From Pavia, we went on a day trip to Milan. Milan is a city brimming with Augustinian history! It's where Augustine was Chair of Rhetoric for the Roman Empire before his conversion. It's also the place where Augustine first met Bishop Ambrose. St. Ambrose was the one who accepted Augustine as a catechumen and prepared him for Baptism on Easter 387. We visited the Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio, which is Ambrose's Cathedral. The group observed the Bishop's chair, saw the ambo from where Ambrose famously preached, and venerated his body held in the Church crypt.*

*In Milan, the pilgrimage also visited two other world-renowned sites: Leonardo Da Vinci's Last Supper fresco and the Duomo di Milano, the Cathedral of Milan. The Cathedral tour started with a tour of the roof where there are hundreds of detailed statues. We then finished our tour of Milan by entering the crypt of the Cathedral which was the site of the original Roman basilica. We renewed our Baptismal Vows in the very same place where Augustine's own Baptism with his son Adeodatus occurred in 387.*

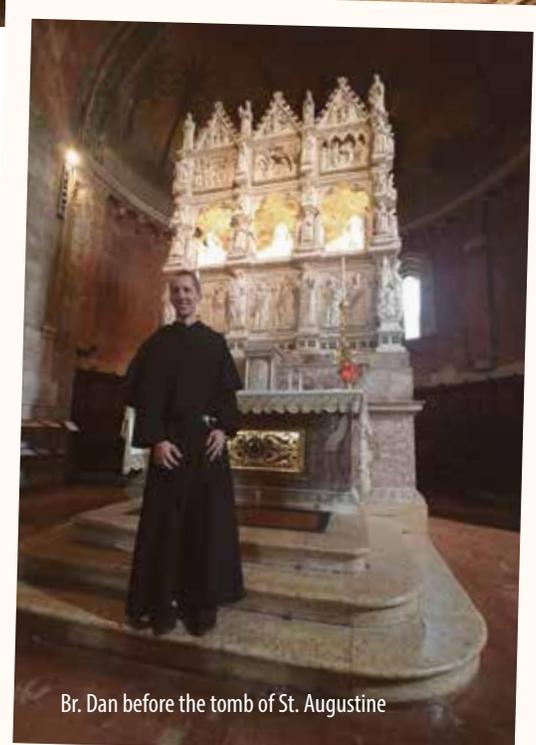


By Br. Jack Tierney, O.S.A.

Excavated from beneath the Milan Cathedral, the Baptistery of San Giovanni alle Fonti is believed by scholars to have been the site of St. Augustine's baptism by St. Ambrose of Milan. The font's octagonal design aligns with the description written by St. Ambrose in 386:

*This temple with eight niches was raised up for a holy purpose, and the octagonal font is worthy of such a function. It was appropriate that this number form the basis for the hall of holy baptism, through which true salvation comes to all the nations in the light of the risen Christ, who opens the doors closed by death and calls the dead out of their tombs; while he frees those who acknowledge themselves to be sinners from their ugly guilt and washes them in the stream of the purifying font.*

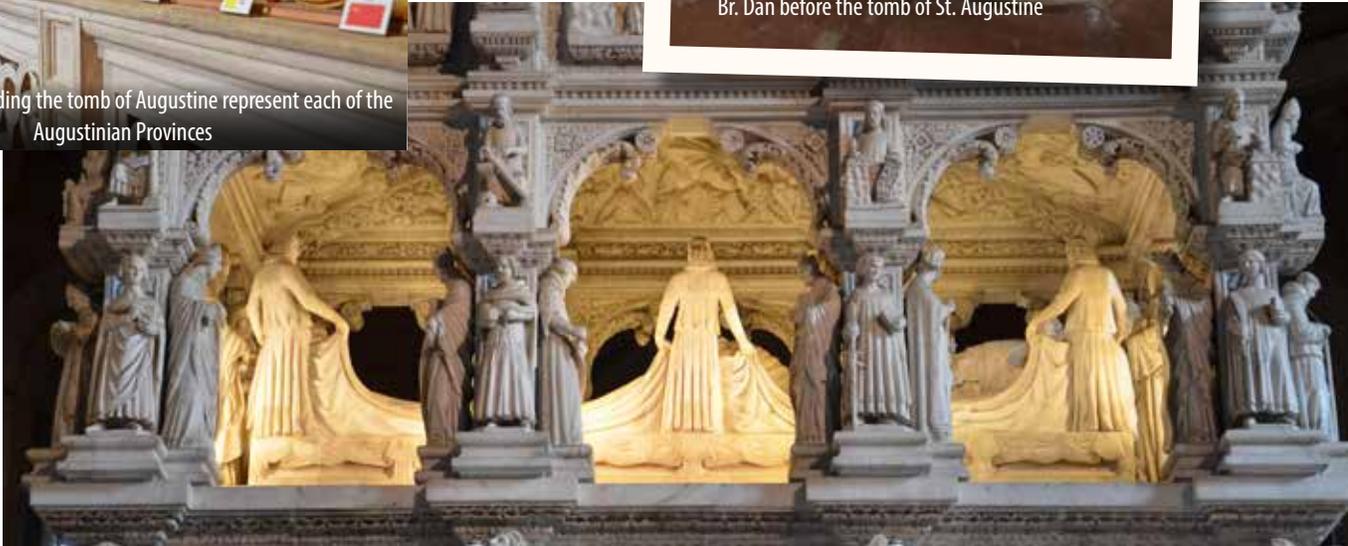
The bones of St. Augustine have been housed at San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro since the 8th century, when the Bishop of Pavia secured his body from the island of Sardinia as it was under siege by Arab forces. They are now kept upon a raised sanctuary in a golden urn, encased in a silver cask, behind a grate at the bottom of an exquisite marble arc. Carved by an unknown mason in the 14th century, the Carrara marble features 95 statues and 50 reliefs depicting in the life of St. Augustine.



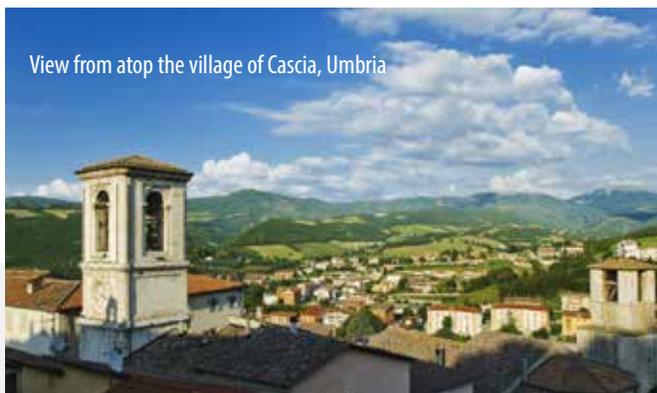
Br. Dan before the tomb of St. Augustine



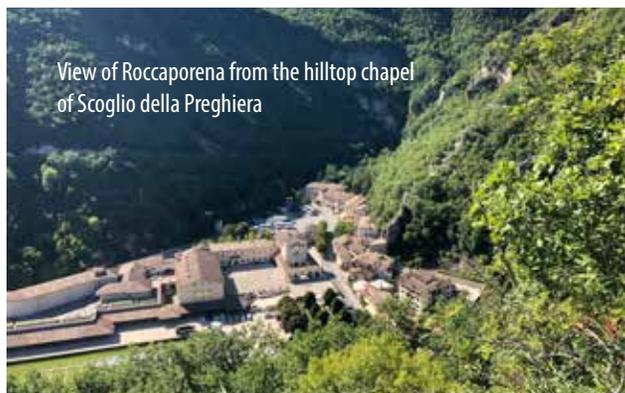
Oil lamps surrounding the tomb of Augustine represent each of the Augustinian Provinces



# Cascia & Roccaporena: retracing the steps of St. Rita



View from atop the village of Cascia, Umbria



View of Roccaporena from the hilltop chapel of Scoglio della Preghiera

*Three years ago, I first had the opportunity to participate in the celebration of St. Rita of Cascia on her feast day at the shrine of St. Rita in Chicago. This celebration left me with a deep desire to visit Cascia and learn more about one of Catholicism's most revered saints, often referred to as the "Saint of the Impossible."*

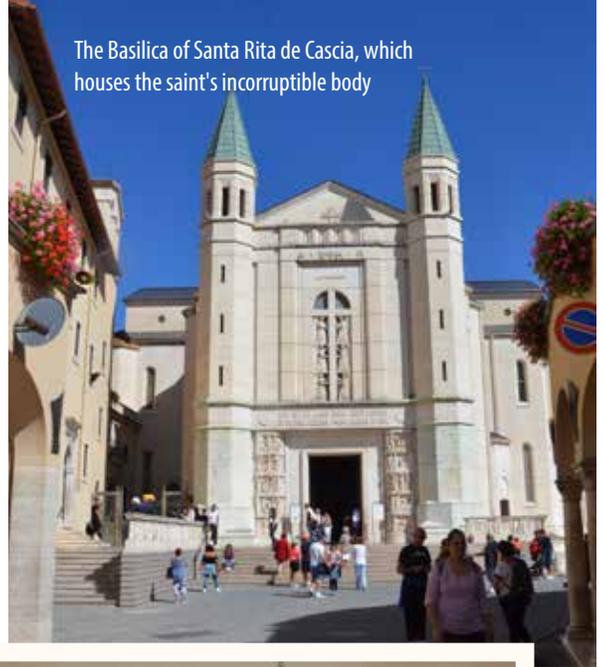
*Cascia is a beautiful, small village. However, it is not just a village; Cascia stands for HOPE for those pilgrims like myself, who traveled from far away to honor someone, who dedicated herself to love of her family, neighbor and God. Many pilgrims, like myself, go every year also to ask for her intercession, so she can help us to love and serve God as she did.*

*The prayers of St. Rita make Cascia a source of STRENGTH for those who have difficulty forgiving someone. Cascia is a sign of God's love for those who seek Him with great desire. Finally, Cascia is still the current location of the monastery where St. Rita spent her life as an Augustinian nun, and I had the unique opportunity to visit. During my visit to the monastery, I saw the rose plants St. Rita loved, the miraculous Cross, and the first tomb of St. Rita. Next to the monastery, is a basilica where amazingly, St. Rita's body still rests peacefully there. It was a moving experience to see faithful people praying and lighting candles.*



By Br. Adnan Ghani, O.S.A.

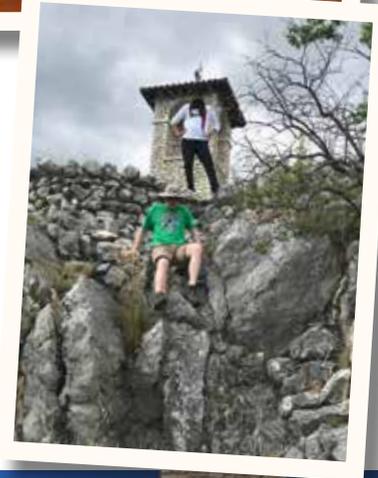
The Basilica of Santa Rita de Cascia, which houses the saint's incorruptible body



*There is so much more that I could say about St. Rita and Cascia. I wish I could talk about all the pilgrims I saw in the city and the Church, or walking up and down the Scoglio della Preghiera—this special place in the neighboring village of Roccaporena, is a site up a steep hill where St. Rita used to pray before she entered the monastery. Hiking up was quite challenging, but meditating on the Via Crucis (or Stations of the Cross) along the way to the top, made the challenge memorable. Once I reached the top, I entered a small chapel on the very location where St. Rita spent time in silence and prayer (called Scoglio della Preguiera). The view from the top was breath-taking. A great view of the whole town of Roccaporena and of neighboring mountains and valleys.*



*I also wish I could describe in detail the hospitality provided to us by the Augustinian Friars during our stay in Cascia. Above all, I wish I could convey the peace and calm I felt visiting the Augustinian nuns. Something different was in the air. I could feel the special energy: they shared Christ's joy, even though I did not understand a single word they said to my companions and myself. I could definitely feel God's presence among us when I was with them. After celebrating St. Rita's feast day in Chicago, my pilgrimage to Cascia, and the experiences and blessings I received there still feel like a real privilege to me. St. Rita, pray for us.*



Scoglio della Preghiera, the site where St. Rita would climb to for solitary prayer.



# Montefalco: entering into contemplation with our saints



photo: Ivan Abramkin

*Montefalco sits on a small hill in the Umbrian region, looking out over a valley with mountains in the distance. It is a stunningly beautiful part of Italy. The area, religiously speaking, is holy ground, being filled with birth places of saints, with Assisi perhaps being the most famous of Umbrian towns. But the region has also given us two Augustinian saints: Rita of Cascia and Clare of Montefalco. Clare lived three centuries before Rita, and was born just after the Order's foundation. Her guidance as abbess of the convent, which led her into a role of teacher, spiritual director, and mother, continues to inspire the contemplative nuns in Montefalco today. Clare's body remains in the church where the nuns gather for prayer and mass, and their convent still bears the fruits of Clare's miracles. Through Clare, heaven and earth meet.*

*We were welcomed into this place of hospitality and prayer for three days near the end of our pilgrimage. The convent and guest house carries a peaceful quiet that only contemplative prayer can create. The current abbess became a mother to us, for spiritually we are all family in Augustine, welcoming us for mass and prayer and making sure we were fed well. The contemplative nuns, I felt while there, are the soul of the Order. They give breath to our more active ministry, refreshing our spirit and offering us a reminder to be rooted always in the love of God. We hope to carry their contemplative peace with us wherever we go.*



By Br. Dan Madden, O.S.A.

While staying at Montefalco, pilgrim friars travelled east to visit the Basilica of St. Nicholas of Tolentino (formerly known simply as St. Augustine's Church). Housed in a special chapel are the mortal remains of St. Nicholas, the first member of the Augustinian Order to be canonized to sainthood. Born in 1245, St. Nicholas made his profession in 1259, only three years after the Grand Union of the Augustinians.

## Tolentino



# LOS AGUSTINOS SE REÚNEN PARA EL CAPÍTULO GENERAL

A principios de septiembre, la Curia de la Orden de los Agustinos abrió su 186º Capítulo General con una misa inaugural en la Basílica de San Agustín en Roma. Esta reunión también marcó el 775 aniversario de la fundación de la Orden, cuando el Papa Inocencio IV unió a la Orden Agustina en la Basílica de Santa María del Popolo. Como testimonio del carisma misionero permanente de la Orden a lo largo de los siglos, este capítulo reunió a 80 frailes delegados que representaron 49 regiones geográficas y 63 países de diferentes orígenes.

"El Capítulo general es el momento de ayudar a cada religioso de la Orden a reafirmar y profundizar su propia vocación Agustina, a crear elementos de renovación personal y comunitaria", dijo el celebrante principal Prior General Alejandro Moral Antón, O.S.A., en su homilía de apertura.

En su forma actual, el Capítulo General es una reunión de tres semanas que se celebra cada seis años y se ubica principalmente en la Curia General de los Agustinos, que mira hacia a la columnata sur de la Basílica de San Pedro en la Ciudad

del Vaticano. En el transcurso de estas tres semanas, los Agustinos se actualizan mutuamente sobre su progreso, votan sobre su liderazgo, ratifican documentos de gobierno y tienden a la promoción general del "bienestar común de todos los frailes" (cita).

El Vicario General Joe Farrell, O.S.A., el Presidente de apertura del Capítulo, enfatizó cómo los frailes delegados pudieron superar grandes distancias, barreras idiomáticas y problemas frecuentes con las visas solo debido a su unidad de propósito: "Hay muchas historias que conforman el tapiz de quienes somos. . . Y, sin embargo, en medio de toda la diversidad de historias, tenemos una cierta característica que nos hace Agustinos: "El objetivo principal de su unión es vivir armoniosamente en su casa, con la intención de Dios en la unidad de la mente y el corazón".

De la importancia más inmediata para el futuro de la Orden fue la elección de un Prior General y su nombramiento de un consejo asesor. Al comienzo de la segunda semana, los delegados reeligieron al P. Alejandro, originario de España,

por un segundo mandato de 6 años, con 61 de los 79 votos destinados al titular anterior. Para su Consejo, el P. Alejandro buscó traer asesores representativos de la presencia global de la Orden: el Vicario General Joe Farrell, O.S.A., de la Provincia de Villanova; El P. Anthony Banks, O.S.A., de Australia; El P. Luis Marín de San Martín, O.S.A., de España; El P. Edward Delang, O.S.A., de Nigeria; El P. Paul Graham, O.S.A., de Inglaterra; y el P. Alexander Lam, O.S.A., de Perú. El Consejo General, junto con el Prior General, forman lo que se llama la Curia General (del latín para el cuidado). La Curia general está encargada de supervisar la unidad y administración de la Orden en sus 52 circunscripciones geográficas.

A continuación, se resumen los informes del Capítulo General que pueden ser de interés para nuestros lectores:

- A través del crecimiento y la consolidación administrativa, se formaron tres nuevas Provincias Agustinas: la Provincia de San Juan de Sahagún, una fusión de las cuatro provincias españolas; la Provincia de Filipinas de Oriente, una rama de la

Provincia de Filipinas; Provincia de Nuestra Señora de la Consolación de Brasil, rama de la Provincia de Madrid. Además, la delegación también aprobó la formación de nuevos vicariatos de Tanzania y Kenia.

- Hno. Zhang Hu Yao, O.S.A. de China compartió con la asamblea las alentadoras noticias del alcance de la misión de los Agustinos en China. El obispo Robert Prevost, O.S.A., explicó: "Los restos de una antigua misión y el comienzo de la nueva han estado presentes [en China] todo el tiempo y ahora hay un chino profeso

solemne de una nueva generación, [Hno. Zhang,] quien con suerte volverá pronto a China y veremos otra nueva área de crecimiento para el orden allí. Hay millones de católicos en China. Es un área enorme abierta a la evangelización".

- Debido a la disminución del número de frailes activos, la Provincia de San José en Canadá ha sido suprimida y absorbida por completo en la Provincia Agustina del Medio Oeste de Nuestra Madre del Buen Consejo.

- La Orden aprovechó esta ocasión para promover el reconocimiento de Santo Tomás de Villanova como Doctor de la Iglesia "por sus contribuciones espirituales, doctrinales y pastorales". Como lo habían hecho los Priors Generales de los Agustinos, Agustinos recoletos y los Agustinos Descalzos en abril de este año, los participantes del Capítulo entregaron una petición firmada al Papa Francisco en la audiencia privada otorgada en la mañana del 13 de septiembre.

## El Padre Tony Pizzo celebra su aniversario 40 en Roma

El Padre Tony Pizzo, O.S.A. celebró su 40 aniversario de profesión en una manera verdaderamente bendecida y fue invitado a celebrar misa en la mañana del primer lunes del Capítulo general agustiniano en Roma. La misa del 2 de septiembre se celebró en la Capilla de Santa Mónica en la Curia general agustiniana, ubicada a cruzar la calle de la columnata sur de la Basílica de San Pedro. Aquí se incluye una versión abreviada de su homilía que él presentó a una audiencia de más de 80 frailes agustinos:

¡Estoy agradecido a Dios por mi vocación agustiniana y por el don del sacerdocio! Hace 40 años que me identifico con la Orden (hoy), cuando me comprometí temporalmente con la Iglesia a través de la Orden y luego discerní mi compromiso solemne tres años después. A través de este espíritu de discernimiento llegué a conocer y amar a Jesucristo a través del espíritu agustiniano de fraternidad y amistad. El espíritu de caridad, especialmente, continúa creciendo dentro de mí, inicialmente debido a la educación de mi familia (aunque hay mucho drama en mi

familia italoamericana). Aunque me han acusado de tener mentalidad de gángster porque soy de Chicago, sin embargo, encontré en la vida de la comunidad agustiniana el espacio para ir más allá de mi perspectiva limitada y experimentar la vida más allá de la familia unida y el vecindario en el que me crie.

Comenzamos juntos para ampliar nuestras perspectivas en este tiempo lleno de gracia de discusiones y deliberaciones sobre cómo fortalecer nuestra misión en la Iglesia en general. Qué gracia es estar aquí, ya que representamos a la Orden en toda su diversidad.

El Evangelio de Lucas ya ha preparado el escenario para la Misión de Jesús. El Espíritu Santo ha descendido sobre él y lo mueve hacia adelante. Ahora, en el poder del Espíritu, Jesús comienza su trabajo (y nosotros también para este Capítulo General 2019). El Evangelio de hoy indica que Jesús comienza su ministerio público al proclamar su liberación a los cautivos y los oprimidos. En presencia de sus oyentes, anuncia que hoy se ha cumplido la profecía de Isaías y ha llegado el año del favor del Señor. Apelamos también al Señor para que su favor descanse con nosotros durante este tiempo lleno de gracia.



Aunque la gente local de Nazaret se maravilla cuando escuchan a Jesús hablar, perciben erróneamente quién es: para ellos, él es simplemente el hijo del carpintero. No reconocen que ante ellos está Aquel que los transformará en una nueva imagen. Aquí, la familiaridad genera desprecio al cuestionar su verdadera identidad.

Las palabras iniciales del texto del sermón de Jesús recuerdan su bautismo: El Espíritu del Señor lo ha ungido ... Y ha sido ungido por un propósito. Lo que él predica hoy será el tema de todo su ministerio. Lo que debatimos, deliberamos y definimos durante este Capítulo general establecerá el rumbo para los próximos seis años a medida que avanzamos acompañándonos unos a otros y al pueblo de Dios en nuestro servicio a la Iglesia. Nuestro mensaje a los hermanos (y hermanas) debe ser un mensaje de esperanza y aliento, especialmente durante estos tiempos difíciles dentro de la Iglesia y su liderazgo. La misión de Jesús se define al traer buenas noticias, perdón y curación, así como al invitar a aquellos que se sienten alienados y cuyas vidas están rotas debido a la naturaleza de nuestra condición pecaminosa. Él predica libertad y transformación.

Cuando Jesús proclama buenas noticias a los pobres, no es solo

una metáfora. La preocupación de Jesús por aquellos que sufren los efectos devastadores de la pobreza, la separación y el abuso de poder se repite a lo largo del Evangelio de Lucas. Jesús tampoco separa la economía de la espiritualidad. La salvación que Jesús trae abarca a toda la persona, espíritu, alma y cuerpo ... ¿Por qué? Porque Dios desea que seamos completos de la ruptura que sufrimos.

Hoy, para aceptar su enseñanza, Jesús les recuerda a sus oyentes que tendrán que cambiar sus actitudes hacia los extraños, que el amor de Dios se extiende más allá de sus fronteras, tendrían que incluir a las personas que excluyen habitualmente. Tendrían que creer que la salvación de Dios es realmente para toda carne, y no solo para unos pocos. Esto va más allá de nuestra tendencia a servir a nuestros propios fines. Nos ofrece a todos la oportunidad de ver el rostro de Dios en las personas y lugares más improbables. Hemos sido ungidos para crear una nueva comunidad que rompa las barreras entre los de adentro y los de afuera, para que toda carne vea la salvación de Dios.

Quizás la parte más inquietante de este pasaje es que Jesús no hace ningún milagro en su ciudad natal. ¿Por qué no deberían recibir algún

beneficio del ministerio de Jesús? Sin embargo, esta sensación de ser molestado puede ser un indicador útil en nuestra vida común en comunidad y en nuestro servicio a la Iglesia. ¿Nos sentimos con derecho a la obra de Jesús entre nosotros? ¿Nos sentimos con derecho a nuestro papel de dirigentes? ¿O compartimos el enfoque de Jesús al ministerio como una misión de servicio?

Estamos inquietos debido a tanto que pensar y mucho que lograr porque a veces, la Misión no se ajusta a nuestras expectativas ni nos ajustamos a las expectativas de los demás. Esta naturaleza inquieta de nuestras vidas se expresa bien en cómo nos relacionamos unos con otros, la lucha continua para buscar a Dios y ver el rostro de Cristo. Si nos vemos como otro problema a resolver, nos reducimos como algo diferente a lo humano y esto es peligroso. Pero cuando nos vemos como otra oportunidad para ver el rostro de Cristo incluso en nuestras heridas ... una palabra amable, un gesto amable, un corazón atento y la naturaleza generosa de nuestra bondad personal, hace que todo lo que hacemos valga la pena porque estamos contribuyendo a la misión de Cristo al acentuar la dignidad de los demás y avanzar hacia la integridad.

## El Padre Tom Vuelve al Liderato de la Promoción Vocacional

Para aquellos que han seguido el proceso del programa de vocaciones Agustinas durante esta última década, tenemos buenas noticias. El Padre Tom McCarthy ha sido reelegido para el puesto de Director de Vocaciones Provinciales, el cual ocupó previamente durante nueve años extremadamente fructuosos. El Padre Richie Mercado, O.S.A., quien estaba a cargo del puesto desde julio de 2017, se enfocará ahora en su ministerio como secretario de la Provincia y

continuará estudiando para obtener su Licenciatura en Derecho Canónico.

El Padre Tom todavía reside en la Comunidad Agustina en el Santuario Marylake en Ontario mientras trabaja en la Oficina Central de Vocaciones Agustinas en la Universidad de Villanova. Siempre está yendo de un lado a otro, recorriendo el país liderando sus retiros parroquiales, celebrando bodas y haciendo solicitudes en el nombre de nuestras misiones peruanas.

Estábamos emocionados de reunirnos con el Padre Tom durante una de sus estadías en Chicago y le preguntamos sobre su enfoque en el trabajo vocacional y sus esperanzas para el futuro de la Orden.

**¿Qué formas de divulgación han sido más efectivas durante su trabajo como director vocacional?**

Yo creo que la clave del trabajo vocacional está en el encuentro, la invitación y la bienvenida, y no

solo yo como director vocacional. Yo soy quien ayuda a coordinarlo, pero los frailes locales, nuestros colaboradores laicos y nuestros amigos son quienes llevan a cabo este trabajo. Dice el dicho: "Se requiere de toda un aldea para criar a un niño". Es lo mismo con las vocaciones. Sí, yo soy la cara del programa de vocaciones. Yo soy quien saldrá a reunirse con la gente en persona; sin embargo, la manera principal en que las personas acuden a nosotros es a través de nuestra página electrónica, donde eligen darnos su información después de visitar nuestro sitio web. Frecuentemente, es su interés en San Agustín lo que los lleva a encontrarnos en la web. Leen Las Confesiones, investigan y encuentran que hay una Orden de San Agustín. Cuando se trata de las redes sociales, eso es lo mejor. También recibimos preguntas a través de VisionMatch.com. Es como una plataforma para encontrar pareja, donde llenas un cuestionario y ves con quién eres compatible.

También vienen recomendados por los frailes y laicos que nos conocen y nos aman. He aquí un ejemplo perfecto: recibí una referencia de uno de nuestros benefactores sobre un joven que era su caddie y estaba interesado en la vida religiosa. Uno de nuestros alumnos va a jugar golf, habla con un joven, y de repente se convierte en nuestro vocero. Imagínense si cada parroquiano hiciera eso con las personas que conoce, sus hijos, sus nietos, o el vecino.

### ¿Cuáles crees que son las diferencias entre el programa vocacional actual y como era hace 30 años?

Cuando empecé como director, todo era más o menos lo que yo llamaría "un molde de hacer galletas". Tu venías y pasabas por el programa de prenoviciado, que solía ser de cuatro años. Luego pasó a un programa de uno o dos años. Todos

eran más o menos lo mismo. Ellos venían. Ellos sabían su fe. Mientras que ahora, la gente entra y pasa por la misma formación, sí, pero cada uno es diferente. El molde de hacer galletas se rompió. Lo tiramos a la basura. Lo vendimos en una venta de garaje. Ya no puedes hacerlo de ese modo.

Agustín, en La Regla, habla de cada uno según su necesidad. Y cada persona que entra es distinta. Son únicos en su formación académica. Son únicos en su experiencia laboral. Son únicos en su edad, únicos en el contexto cultural.

### Si un hombre contacta a los Agustinos, ¿qué buscas en tu primera conversación con él?

Estoy buscando a alguien que sea auténtico. Muchas veces la gente está nerviosa. No saben qué hacer. A veces soy el primer director vocacional con quien han hablado. Algunos de ellos han hablado con muchos. No todos los que vienen, no todos los que nos recomiendan, son adecuados. Debo ver si hay un nivel de comodidad. Me hago dos preguntas. Primero, ¿dejaría que este hombre fuera el pastor de mi madre? Segundo, ¿me gustaría compartir con esta persona en la orden? Ahora, eso no significa que cada persona con la que me encuentro, nos convertimos en los mejores amigos. En la vida religiosa, no eres amigos con todos, pero eres un hermano en comunidad. No quiero clones de Tom McCarthy. Es cuestión de decir, conozco la Provincia, ¿haría el un buen trabajo? ¿encajaría él aquí? ¿Y sabes lo que he aprendido? No puedes cambiar a la gente. Puedes cambiar el exterior ... Podemos enseñar modales. Pero no puedes enseñar o cambiar a alguien que tiene un problema profundo o una forma de hacer las cosas.

Las personas, como nuestros parroquianos y benefactores, solo conocen a los hombres que acepto para la vocación. A quienes nunca conocen son a quienes les he dicho "No". Nadie los conoce. Durante

los nueve años que trabajé como director por primera vez, nadie conoció a las personas a las que les dije "No". Si quisieras, podríamos llenar nuestras casas de estos hombres, pero entonces tendrías personas que simplemente no encajan. Les digo a los candidatos: "Estoy aquí para caminar con ustedes. Esa es mi función".

### ¿Cuáles son las dudas más comunes que pueden hacer dudar a alguien de comenzar el proceso de formación?

Tenemos miedo al compromiso en nuestra cultura. Existe una actitud que dice: "Si esto no funciona, puedo cambiarme a otra cosa". Las personas eligen vivir juntas antes del matrimonio y piensan: "Bueno, lo intentaremos. Y si no funciona, podemos irnos". Entonces, siempre les digo, no piensen que están comenzando un compromiso de seis, siete u ocho años. Comprométanse por un año. Dividan todo en un año. Si vas a unirte, hazlo por un año y vive ese año. Si al final sientes que fue un buen año, discierne, ¿debería tomarme otro año? Entonces, siempre les digo: "Tómenselo un año al tiempo".

Pero también están los problemas con la Iglesia y los escándalos. Y creo que ese tema lo mencionan más los miembros de la familia del joven y no necesariamente el joven. Siempre miro a la iglesia al nivel local. Sí, tenemos escándalo, pero si personalmente he tenido buenas experiencias con la iglesia, con sacerdotes y ministros religiosos laicos, eso será más importante para mí que lo que leo en los periódicos. Los encubrimientos han sido horribles. No estoy tratando de excusarlo de ninguna manera. Pero es sorprendente que a pesar de esto, la gente todavía diga: "Esa no es mi experiencia".



# Fr. Tom McCarthy Returns to Helm of Vocations Outreach

I should be just the one who helps coordinate it, but the local friars, our lay collaborators, and our lay friends, they are all serving as vocations outreach. There's the old saying, "It takes a village to raise a child." It's the same with vocations. Yes, I am the face of vocations outreach. I am the one who will be out meeting people one-on-one; however, the main way people come to us is through the website, where they come to our website and choose to give their information to us. That's probably the most serious of candidates, because they found us. Often, they find us through their interest in St. Augustine. They read *The Confessions* and they do some searching, and they find there's an Order of Saint Augustine. When it comes to social media context, that's the best. Then we get inquiries through VisionMatch.com. It's like those dating match sites, you fill out a survey, and you see who you're compatible with.

Then they also come through the personal encounters of friars and the lay people who know and love us. Here is a perfect example: I had a referral from one of our benefactors about a young man who was his caddie and was interested in joining religious life. An alum is out golfing, and he's talking with a young man, and suddenly he becomes an advocate for us. But imagine if every parishioner did that, if every parishioner looked at people they know, their children, their grandchildren, the neighbor down the street, even our young people, our students.

***What do you think are the differences now, in terms of how vocations are coming in, versus when you came in 30 years ago?***

I think when I came in, everything was pretty much what I would call "cookie-cutter." You came in, you went through a pre-novitiate program. In our case it was a four-year program. Then it started going into a one- or two-year

*"McCarthy" continued on page 35*

**F**or those of you who have followed the rise in Augustinian vocations over the past decade, we have what should be welcome news. Fr. Tom McCarthy, O.S.A. has now been reappointed to the position of Provincial Vocations Director, which he previously held for nine extremely fruitful years. Fr. Richie Mercado, O.S.A., who has held the position since July 2017, will focus on his ministry as Province Secretary and continue to study towards his Licentiate in Canon Law.

Fr. Tom still resides at the Augustinian Community at Marylake Shrine in Ontario, while he works through the central Augustinian Vocations Office based at Villanova University. He is always on the move, of course, touring the country giving his renowned parish retreats, celebrating weddings, and making appeals on behalf of our Peruvian missions.

We were excited to meet up with Fr. Tom on one of his stops through Chicago and ask him about his approach to vocation work and his hopes for the future of the Order.

***What forms of outreach have been most effective for you as vocation director?***

I think the key to vocation work is in encounter, invitation, and welcoming. Not just me as vocation director.

# "This is our Fatima"



## The Augustinians of Marylake Shrine Welcome Portuguese Community

**T**wice a year, the Portuguese faithful of the Toronto region congregate at the Marylake Shrine, which over the last two decades has become their “proxy Fatima.” The Pilgrimages for Our Lady of Fatima is undertaken by hundreds in mid-May and Mid-October, in recognition of Mary’s first and final appearances to three Portuguese shepherd children in 1917. In keeping with the traditions, many of the pilgrims make their way by foot, walking the 25 miles from Toronto to Marylake, an 800-acre of campus administered by the Augustinian Friars and Sisters.

The hundreds of pilgrims, who range in age from children to seniors, must wake up hours before dawn to begin their walk, which typically takes 8 to 9 hours. Along the way they are supported by volunteers who line up on the long stretch of Toronto’s Keele Street dispensing food and drinks.

Marylake has been a destination for Fatima pilgrimages for decades now, largely self-selected by the Portuguese population that grew in Toronto during the ‘80s and ‘90s. Maria Dulcinea, who moved from Portugal to Toronto in 1987, says that the Augustinian Shrine to Lady of Grace offered the community a chance to recreate their feast day devotions despite their relocation: “This has become like Fatima in Portugal. This is the point of reference for our Mother and it’s a celebration and we miss Fatima on the 13th of May, especially. And now on the 13th of October. But, this is a reverence for us.” The daunting and arduous trek is typically performed as an offering up the pilgrims to Our Lady of Fatima either for a prayer intention or in thanksgiving. Dulcinea explained, “I walk together with two of my friends. We sometimes have a prayer that we want to bring to the Mother. This year, I just came

because I'm very grateful for everything happening to me and my family. I don't ask always for graces, but I am coming here just to thank my Mother in heaven for what I have, for everything."

The closing pilgrimage falls on the Saturday closest to October 13, the anniversary of the "Miracle of the Sun" when Mary made her final apparition to a crowd of thousands at Fatima. Temperatures in Toronto can dip into the low 40s, demanding careful preparation for those who undertake the walk. "In October it's very hard, some years. Because it's very cold, so we have to have good clothes," said Dulcinea, "There was a year where it was raining and we said, 'Well, we just have to go!'"

Pilgrimage veteran Diana Faria, who maintains a blog of tips for fellow sojourners, explains that the exhaustion of the walk yields great rewards: "Those eight, nine, even ten hours of struggling through with the wind against you and self-doubt in your mind is worth it...Just for a few minutes of absolute, guaranteed serenity. Just to find those few moments where everything you fought for has yielded a reward, and you love this reward."

Though the Augustinians at Marylake had not envisioned creating a place of devotion to Our Lady of Fatima, they have

embraced its development over the years, and they now count on the feast days as their largest events of the year. The Friday evening before the celebration Our Lady of Fatima is placed upon her processional *trono*, garlanded with a cloud of pink and purple flowers, and installed at the side of the altar. Pilgrims arrive as early as 5:30 am on Saturday to light candles, pray to Our Lady, and join in morning liturgy with the Augustinian friars. The events of the day include an opening processional, stations of the cross, and a rosary, all of which take place along Marylake's historic mile-long Rosary Path. Bilingual mass was concelebrated at 5 pm by Prior Provincial Anthony B. Pizzo, O.S.A., followed by a closing candlelit procession to the hilltop Blessed Sacrament Chapel, which overlooks the Marylake Shrine and Monastery.

Meanwhile, in the basement below the altar, volunteers greet pilgrims throughout the day with basins to wash and soothe their aching feet, fresh coffee to warm them, and delicious Portuguese pastries (highlighted by the *Malasadas*, a traditional desert of fried dough). For many this is the spot where the familiar faces of fellow pilgrims develop into lifelong friends. "We've seen each other for many years," says Dulcinea, "Even the people downstairs who help clean, wash the feet and give us soup. We all know each other from here and each year we are able to catch up."



# IN MEMORIAM

## *Rev. Michael J. Slattery, O.S.A.* (1949-2019)



**Michael James Slattery O.S.A.** entered into eternal life on July 17, 2019. He was interred at the Augustinian plot at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Alsip, IL on July 23.

Fr. Michael was born September 21, 1949 in Rockford, IL to Robert E. and Elizabeth Slattery. He was Baptized on October 23, 1949 at St. Mary Church, Rockford. He received the Sacrament of Confirmation on February 19, 1959 at the same church.

Following graduation from St. Mary School, Rockford, in 1963, Fr. Michael entered the Augustinian formation program at St. Augustine Seminary, Holland, Michigan. He received his high school diploma in 1967.

He was received into the Augustinian Novitiate on September 3, 1967 and professed temporary vows to the Order on September 4, 1968. He then took part in the college-level Augustinian formation program at Tolentine College in Olympia Fields, IL, earning a B. A. in Philosophy in 1972.

He taught at Mendel Catholic High School, Chicago, IL, during the 1972-73 school year. He began theological studies in 1973 at Catholic Theological Union, while residing at St. John Stone Friary, Chicago. He professed solemn vows on March 6, 1976.

He was ordained to the priesthood on May 7, 1977 and served as Associate Pastor of Holy Rosary Parish, Kenosha, Wisconsin, from 1977 to 1979. In 1979 he was assigned to St. John Stone Friary, Chicago, where he was part of the Formation Team as well as Director of Vocations.

In 1982 he was assigned to Bl. Stephen Bellesini Monastery (at Mendel Catholic High School), Chicago, where he continued his Vocation work and served as Director of Pre-Novitiate Formation. He returned in 1983 to Holy Rosary Parish, Kenosha, again serving as Associate Pastor. In 1987 he became Associate Pastor of St. Clare of Montefalco Parish, Chicago. He was named Pastor there in 1991.

Fr. Michael moved to St. John Stone Friary, Chicago in 1995. While residing there, he taught at St. Rita High School, Chicago during 1995 and then ministered as Chaplain at Little Company of Mary Hospital, Evergreen Park, IL until 1999.

In 1999 Fr. Michael was named Pastor of St. Jude Parish, New Lenox, IL, a post he held until 2006. He resided in the Augustinian community at St. Rita Parish, Chicago, from 2006 to 2009. He lived at St. John of Sahagún Friary (at Providence Catholic High School), New Lenox, IL, from 2009 to 2011, when he returned to St. Rita Parish. Fr. Michael was Pastor of St. Augustine Parish, Philadelphia from July, 2012 to August, 2014. At that time, he again returned to St. Rita Parish, Chicago.

Due to declining health in 2015, Fr. Michael was assigned to Bl. Stephen Bellesini Friary, Crown Point, IN, where he could receive the needed health care. He served as Chaplain at Franciscan Health.

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# Province Advancement Council

## *Are You One?*

By Michael Gerrity, Chief Advancement Officer

In 2011, the Province under the leadership of Prior Provincial Fr. Bernie Scianna, O.S.A., decided to revitalize the Province's program for earning donors' support. At that time, I urged Fr. Bernie and his brothers on the Provincial Council (small body of Fathers and Brothers who advise the Prior Provincial) to recruit a group of lay leaders to help secure charitable gifts to support the works of the Midwest Augustinians. He agreed. We set about creating criteria and standards for the first Midwest Augustinians Province Advancement Council. The Council is now in its eighth year.

This group of highly motivated and committed leaders agreed to meet four times a year, and to advise the Province on matters relating to communications, messaging, and most importantly on fundraising. They are part of the leadership team of the Prior Provincial, Fr. Tony Pizzo, O.S.A. Upon taking office in June 2018, Fr. Tony saw the value in this body and has decided to grow their ranks.

Province Advancement Council members assume these important responsibilities: help to lead and provide direction for fundraising efforts, make an annual sacrificial donation to the Province, advise on fundraising plans and materials, contacting donors to thank them, and, on occasion, work alongside Fr. Tony and other Augustinians, and with the Advancement staff, to secure gifts. Periodically you will see stories about the Advancement Council members in our news magazine and on our website.

In terms of their backgrounds, the Advancement Council members are men and women who are passionate about the Augustinians, and who have experienced the Augustinians as teachers, as pastors, as chaplains, as mentors, and as friends. They come from diverse places: Arizona, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, and Wisconsin. If you are interested in joining, please contact Michael Gerrity, Chief Advancement Officer at 312-241-9696 or [mikewger@gmail.com](mailto:mikewger@gmail.com). You could help to make some truly "good" things happen for our faith and our world.



# Working Our Corner of the Vineyard: *Our Giving Societies*

*A Message from Province Advancement Director Michael Gerrity*



To help explain my work, I think of the Midwest Augustinians and their supporters in the context of God's great vineyard. Our goal is to advance the Kingdom of God on earth. We try to do so in our corner of His vineyard in a distinctly Augustinian manner: in a community of love and support and dedication to the virtues of unity, truth, and charity. Each of us does our part to the fullest within the framework of our God-given gifts and talents.

The Midwest Augustinians require over \$3,000,000 a year to cover the cost of our vocations outreach program, the studies of our men in formation, our retired and infirm friars, and our missions in Northern Peru.

The Vatican, the dioceses we serve, our schools, and our parishes: these are not major sources of funding for us. Yet, they all depend upon us to recruit and educate new Augustinian priests and brothers to serve them.

We depend on you, our benefactors and supporters, for your charitable gifts.

We recognize and appreciate all support and every gift. Like most charities, we rely upon a smaller group of leaders to provide larger contributions.

To promote and recognize our donors, we have created three distinct giving societies:

- ***The Saints & Blesseds Society*** – For those willing to donate **\$3,500 a year (\$9.58 a day)** to support our vocations, our retired and infirm Augustinians, or our work among the poor in Northern Peru.
- ***One Mind One Heart Society*** – For those willing to donate **\$1,000 a year (\$2.74 a day)** to support our vocations, our retired and infirm Augustinians, or our work among the poor in Northern Peru.
- ***Restless Hearts Society*** – For supporters who include the Augustinians in their **estate plans or wills**. This includes gifts as beneficiaries on retirement accounts, life insurance, or in their wills. Over 200 donors have made this commitment during the past decade.

You can always designate how your gift will be used: vocations outreach program, men in formation studies, retired men, or missions in Peru. You also can designate your gift in memory of or in an honor of an Augustinian or other loved one. For more information please call our Chief Advancement Officer, Michael Gerrity, at 312-241-9696, or [mikewger@gmail.com](mailto:mikewger@gmail.com). Thank you.

# news briefs

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## Augustinian seminarians run Tough Mudder

*The 10-mile, mud soaked obstacle race includes team wall climbs, rope swings, pole shimmies, and crawls under active electric wires! This August, eight of our men in formation celebrated the start of a new semester by completing the popular annual endurance event, held in Rockford, IL.*



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## Novitiate opens in new locale

*David Relstab, of the Midwest Province, has received his white habit and entered into his yearlong novitiate. David, a native of Palos Hills, IL, is joined by Ramon Riesgo of the California Province. On August 15 the new Augustinian Novitiate house was inaugurated. The Old Radnor Mansion in Radnor, PA was gifted to the Augustinians by James and Mary Colleran. The mansion has been re-purposed as the novitiate for three friars and four to six novices.*



## Friars join campaign to support immigrant children & families

*The 40 days of prayer and fasting, titled "They're All Our Children," was hosted by the Archdiocese of Chicago and ran from October 16 to November 24. Individuals were invited to register for select days to fast and pray for the just treatment of the 15,000 immigrant children currently being held in detention centers.*

# Thank You to Our Newest Donors!

**W**e 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 June 20, 2019 and October 10, 2019. We ask all our readers to keep these newest supporters in your prayers.

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 here, please contact us at [advancement@midwestaugustinians.org](mailto:advancement@midwestaugustinians.org) or at 773-595-4021.

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**I**n each issue, we recognize the Augustinians, parishes, schools, and individuals that have been honored with a tribute or memorial gift. The following gifts were received between June 20, 2019 and October 10, 2019. List a friar in the enclosed envelope with a donation, and he will be recognized in the next issue of *The Midwest Augustinian!*

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**Rev. Thomas W. van Thienen, O.S.A. †**

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program. And then everyone was kind of the same. They came. They knew their faith. Where now, people are coming in, and do they all do the same formational things? Yeah. But everyone is different. Cookie cutter is smashed. We threw it out. We sold it at a garage sale. You can't do it anymore. Augustine, in the rule, talks about each according to his need. And every single person that comes in is unique. They're unique in their educational background. They're unique in their situation of where . . . their work experience. They're unique in their ages, unique in the cultural background.

***If a man contacts the Augustinians, what are you looking for in your first conversation with him?***

I'm looking for someone who I feel is authentic. A lot of times people are nervous. They don't know what to do. Sometimes I'm the first vocation director they've spoken to. Some of them have opened to many. Not everyone who comes, not everyone who's recommended to us, is a fit. I must see whether there is a comfort level. I ask myself two questions. One, would I let this man minister to my mother? And two, would I want to live with them? Now that doesn't mean every single person I encounter, we become best of friends. In religious life, you're not best friends with everyone, but you're a brother in community. I don't want to get clones of Tom McCarthy. It's a matter of saying, I know the Province, would he work? Would he fit in? And you know what I've learned, you can't change people. You can change some outward . . . We can teach table manners. But you can't teach or change someone who has a deep-seeded issue or way of doing things.

People like our parishioners and donors they only know the men I bring in. Who you never know are the ones to whom I have said "No" to. Nobody knows those. Over the nine years that I did this, nobody knows the people I said "No" to. If you wanted, we could fill our houses. But then you're going to have people that just don't fit. I tell the candidates, I say, "I'm here to walk with you. That's my role."

***What do you find are the most common hesitations men have that may hold them back from beginning formation?***

We have a fear of commitment in today's culture. There's this overarch attitude that says, "If this doesn't work out, I can change to something else." People choose to live with each other before marriage and think, "Well, we'll test it out. And if it doesn't work out, I can get out." So, I always tell people, don't think you're starting a six, seven, eight-year commitment. Commit for one year. Break everything down into one year. If you're going to join, join for one year. And experience the year. Live it out. If it is good at the end of that year, you discern, should I do another year? Or is it time to maybe discern out. So, I always say, "Look at it in pockets of a year."

But there's also the problems with the church, and some of the scandals. And now that issue I think is brought up more by the family members of a young man, and not necessarily the young man. I always look at the church as local. Yes, we have the scandal, but if I personally have had good experiences with church, with priests and religious lay ministers, that's going to be more of a focus for me than what I read in the news. The cover-ups have been horrible. I'm not trying to, in any way, whitewash it. But it's amazing, even considering these, that people are still saying, "Well that's not my experience."

***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.***



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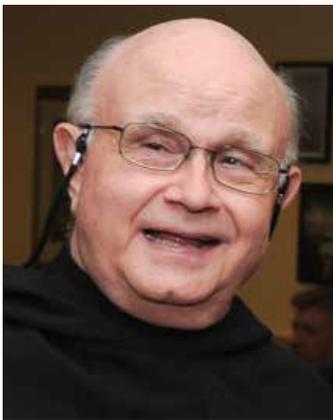
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**AUGUSTINIAN GALA**  
Friday, April 24 2020

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Rev. Daniel Hartigan, O.S.A.†



Robert Sullivan



Mark Hacker

The Drake Hotel - Downtown Chicago - 6:30 to 10:00 PM

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