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The support given to aid the uninsured to provide medical care at the Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor (A.D.R.O.P.) Unity Clinic in South Philadelphia.

Please consider a gift to the Augustinian Fund before the end of the fiscal year on May 31, 2016.

Use the Envelope in this magazine on page 12 to mail your check or donate online at www.augustinianfund.org/donate/

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to John J. Sheridan, O.S.A. (Archivist), and June Weiland (Assistant Archivist) of the Augustinian Provincial Archives at Saint Thomas of Villanova Monastery; the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center for their access to the Robert and Theresa Halvey Photograph Collection; Mary Moody for access to her family photos; Ted Glessner; Scott Fremont, Grace Kane, Mrs. Marge Roccio and Sr. Anne Brigid Gallagher, I.H.M., of the Bonner-Prendergast staff; Augustinian Friars: Michael Di Gregorio, O.S.A., (Prior Provincial), Richard Cannuli, O.S.A., Arthur Chappell, O.S.A., John Denny, O.S.A., Edward Dixey, O.S.A., Richard Ekmann, O.S.A., Rob Hagan, O.S.A., Francis Horn, O.S.A., Donald Reilly, O.S.A.; Father Bill’s brothers and sisters, Joan Alice, Al, Betty, Mary, Ed and Patty.


ON THE COVER
Father Bill Atkinson, O.S.A., Servant of God. From the 2016 icon written by Richard Cannuli, O.S.A., an internationally known artist and faculty member of Villanova University since 1978. Known for his work in watercolor, oil, printmaking, collage, icons, liturgical design and vestments, Father Cannuli made the vestments for Father Bill seen in his Ordination photos.

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The Year of Mercy

Pope Francis expresses the Year of Mercy as an opportunity for the gift of grace and conversion. The journey for these gifts requires a pilgrimage to a Holy Door, and Francis has made the doors accessible throughout the world, with special considerations for prisoners and disabled individuals. This year reminds us of the need for forgiveness, confession and Works of Mercy. The feature highlights the special Holy Door at the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia, a devotional space founded in 1907 by Augustinians of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova. Saint Rita of Cascia, an Augustinian nun known for her forgiveness and mercy, is also highlighted, along with other Augustinian Saints and Blesseds known for their works of mercy.

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Father Bill Atkinson, O.S.A., Servant of God
Bill Atkinson, third of seven children, was born to Mary Connelly Atkinson and Allen Joseph Atkinson on January 4, 1946, in Philadelphia, Pa. He was raised in Upper Darby, Pa., steps away from the trolley tracks that came from the nearby 69th Street terminal. He was a quiet, upbeat kid who went to Saint Alice church and grade school. He attended Monsignor Bonner Roman High School, in Drexel Hill, Pa., an Archdiocesan high school staffed by the Augustinian Friars, a trolley stop away from his home. He is described by many as a talented athlete who focused mainly on playing baseball. He was 18 when he entered the Augustinian Order and 19 when he was received as a novice in the remote novitiate house on the Hudson, north of West Point. It was there that Bill Atkinson met with a near fatal accident that would devastate his body but not his soul or his course. His daily survival story is one of faith, Augustinian brotherhood, family and friendship. His life is a story about a quadriplegic whose actions of service and commitment convinced the Augustinians and the Church that he should be ordained, a groundbreaking action approved by Rome. His death has not stopped his momentum, and as his Augustinian brotherhood, family and friends share his story, it has prompted the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to approve the opening of Father Bill Atkinson’s Cause for Sainthood.

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Dear Friends,

May the grace and peace of the Easter Season, through which we now journey, be yours! Please accept the good wishes of all of the friars of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova who join me in expressing prayersful greetings to you.

Once again, we find ourselves refreshed and enlightened by Spring’s warmth and by the added daylight which the season brings. They are reminders of the new life that has been born for us through the great mystery we have recently celebrated, of Jesus’ triumph over sin and death.

May the spirit of these events touch you deeply and remain with you for many months to come.

We are happy to communicate to you several life-giving and hope-filled events which are recounted in this issue of The Augustinian. We’ve shared with you previously the encouraging news of the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of our brother, Father Bill Atkinson, and now we wish to introduce the person and witness of Father Bill more extensively through these pages. I am grateful to Teddie Gallagher for the profile on his life which she has researched and now presents here.

As we continue to journey through the Year of Mercy proclaimed by Pope Francis, we are reminded of the invitation to accept and to share the great gift of mercy that it beparphrased to us. The means to do so are many; the witness of members of our own Augustinian Family are not lacking, whether long ago or in our own day, as you will see.

In the months just past, as well as those soon to come, events in the lives of several of our brothers are occasions of celebration. Professions and ordinations are often the highpoints that mark advancement along the vocational path of religious life and ministry. We give thanks to God for the generous commitment which these events celebrate.

Finally, we mark a sadder milestone in the passing of one of our brothers, whose service to the Province, to the Order and to the Church will not go unnoticed, for his contribution illustrates well the value of availability and generosity in the Augustinian tradition.

Wishing you happy reading and many blessings,

Michael F. Di Gregorio, O.S.A.
PRIOR PROVINCIAL
PROVINCE OF SAINT THOMAS OF VILLANOVA

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On November 17, 2015, at 4:20 P.M., Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia introduced the question of the Cause of Bill Atkinson, O.S.A., to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. “William Atkinson’s Cause will be a beautiful one, because it would be a source of encouragement for people with this kind of accident in their life, this kind of disability, but also it reminds us of the great generosity of his family and his (Augustinian) religious community; they were all called to holiness by their special care for this man. I think he will fit very beautifully into the niche of the communion of saints as a very special patron.”

The assembly was requested by the president of the USCCB and it was unanimous.

The Augustinian presents a brief look at the life of Father Atkinson to give insight into his spirit, his generosity and his patients. Left a quadriplegic for 41 years after a tragic toboggan accident, Father Bill depended on others for morning and evening care and for his meals. But once he was in his electric wheelchair his energy and personality were unstoppable and his spiritual life was extraordinary. His ordination to the priesthood was truly a shared victory, a triumph of a cross suffered and carried by Father Bill, his family, the Augustinian community and so many friends, to see him ordained that day and become a priest for eternity. And now, perhaps, a saint.

He was a beloved priest, teacher, coach, chaplain, friend and brother to so many.

“Day after day, help of others along the way, valued friends, sisters, brothers, I simply borrowed - the strength of others”
William Edward Atkinson, O.S.A., was born on January 4, 1946, to Mary Connelly Atkinson and Allen Joseph Atkinson and baptized at Saint Alice’s church, Upper Darby, Pa., on January 27, 1946. The third of seven children, the family lived at 409 Sansom Street, Upper Darby, Pa. He attended Saint Alice’s Grammar School and received his first sacraments at the parish.

In 1959, Bill began his freshman year as a student at Monsignor Bonner High School for boys staffed by the Order of Saint Augustine of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova, known to family and friends as “Willy” and Bill to others, he was an extremely skilled athlete who played baseball all four years at Bonner and intramural sports for the same four years. Beginning in his freshman year, he and a group of his friends volunteered for the St. Edmund’s Home for Children, an archdiocesan home for the care and treatment of children with severe mental and physical limitations.

Father Melton, O.S.A. wrote this reflection on Bill at Bonner:

“Bill will never be accused of rushing into a serious decision without ample and proper thought and consideration. So, while the news that he wanted to become an Augustinian came as no surprise, he had that great charm of making the actual announcement a surprising relief.”

— John H. Melton, O.S.A., teacher and guidance counselor at Monsignor Bonner High School for 32 years.

In the spring of his senior year, Bill announced that he had made up his mind to enter the Augustinian Order. Because he had not studied Latin or Greek, the 17-year-old entered the minor seminary at Augustinian Academy, Staten Island, for a post-graduate year, where it is said he studied and chored guided by Novice Master, Father William J. Krupa, O.S.A., Sub-Master, Thomas J. Dillon, O.S.A. and Prior, Henry A. Caffrey, O.S.A.

That said, a snowstorm had come through the area and the fresh, deep and wind-whipped snows on the hills around the novitiate needed to be plowed and shoveled before the novices could choose what to do. Many of the novices, including Bill, chose to climb into a toboggan and head through a tree-cleared half-mile toboggan course that cut around a 90-degree turn before it descended the property for an exhilarating ride toward the Hudson. It is here that Bill, at the front of the first toboggan down the hill, took the brunt of the force when the toboggan veered off the 90-degree turn and slammed into a tree. No one else in the toboggan was injured, but 19-year-old Bill Atkinson sat, conscious, but unable to move on the shredded remains of a toboggan, with 45 minutes of unplowed roads between him and Saint Francis Hospital in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Amid freezing temperatures, with snow blowing fiercely up from the Hudson, another toboggan was put under Bill and he was carried on it to the back of a station wagon. Father Bill was having trouble breathing during the car ride but the group got him to the hospital. No one who was in the car remembers how they made it through the snow to the hospital. And, since they hadn’t been out beyond the confines of the Novitiate, they don’t know how they even knew how to get to the hospital.
“The kindest way I can tell you is to be brief, cruel and to the point. Your son is gravely ill and if he recovers he will never move again from the neck down. Bill’s life and future are in the hands of God.”

— Dr. Weiss speaking to Bill’s mother, father and Father Melton on February 23, 1965.

In critical condition, Bill’s life drifted near death, as his shattered spine affected his ability to control the areas below his neck, including his breathing. Father Krupa stayed with Bill overnight and the next morning said Mass with Bill’s parents and Father Melton who had arrived to be with Bill. An operation on his spine was performed on February 25, at 3:30 P.M., by neurologist Dr. Weiss to relieve the “bone locking” and free up the blood supply to his brain. The doctor was not hopeful of Bill’s recovery of movement. On February 24, Father Krupa said the rosary with him and noted Bill was clear-headed but unable to talk because of the tracheotomy.

“He is in a lot of pain, but very consciously suffering in union with Christ’s suffering on the cross. He frequently asks to hear the words of the Lord and the words of Christ. He especially wants to and pains to be borne for the love and the suffering of Christ. He frequently asks to hear the words of Christ’s suffering on the cross. He is conscious suffering in union with Christ’s suffering on the cross. He is conscious suffering in union with Christ’s suffering on the cross.”

— Father Krupa

On April 3, 1965, Brother Bill was driven by ambulance from Poughkeepsie to Magee Memorial Hospital, Philadelphia, Pa., for possible rehabilitation therapy. At the time he left St. Francis Hospital, it was noted that he was in excellent spirits, although still assisted by a respirator, and that he was happy in the knowledge that he now had vows. For the next four days, Brother Bill remained in critical condition. He contracted pneumonia, with high fevers and were said to have been heroic examples of faith and trust in the will of God. It is said that when he was most critical, his mother stood by him, saying “breathe Bill.”

Back at the Novitiate the friars and novices had been saying a public Novena to Blessed John Neumann for Brother Bill. On Christmas 1965, Brother Bill visited his classmates and friars at Saint Mary’s Hall at Villanova. Ninety-one friars joined him there that day, offering a community Christmas Mass in his name.

“I should like to note that in the many hours I spent beside his hospital bed he never uttered a single word of complaint or self-pity, even during times when he was obviously in great pain or discomfort from breathing difficulties and from six weeks of traction during which frightful bed sores developed on his shoulders, back of the head and lower back.”

— File note written by William J. Krupa, O.S.A., Master of Novices at the time Bill lift the noviciate.

The doctors were at a loss to explain his survival in terms of medicine and medical science alone.

In September, Brother Bill began his undergraduate studies at Villanova University, Villanova, Pa., taking ten credits in his first semester. He took a leave of absence for a year in 1968 to redo his novitiate year, which he was permitted to do at Saint Mary’s (instead of New Hamburg), resuming classes in the fall of 1970, graduating in September of 1974.

“I was trying to remember what decorated the walls of Bill’s room in the Monastery. All I could remember were pictures of his family — those whom he loved so dearly. No plaques, no honors, just his diploma from Villanova University — not the honorary doctorate, but the one he had earned through much toil and effort. He went to the classes, did the readings, typed the papers and tests. He was proud of that achievement, and rightfully so.”

— Father Francis J. Horn, O.S.A., homilist at Father Bill’s funeral Mass.

In September 1966, 10 months after he came to Magee hospital, Brother Bill returned to his life as an Augustinian seminarian, living within the Augustinian community at Saint Mary’s Hall, a new seminary built on Route 320 across from Villanova’s campus. Some of the seminarians living at Saint Mary’s had been temporarily living at Magee Memorial Hospital to learn to care for Brother Bill and many, many more friars would be trained to do so as the years passed.

The article in the Catholic Twin Circle also noted cards and letters from all points drifted into the hospital, and Atkinson said they helped to keep his spirits up. Although he had not yet attended Villanova University, he said a lot of the mail came from many of the students and faculty at the Augustinian-founded school. As he progressed, Brother Bill spent weekends at home with his parents and youngest siblings, Patty and Ed.

Although Brother Bill’s physical progress was characterized as “medically impossible” or “miraculous,” it was his psychological health and high spirits that touched and amazed the hospital personnel. This twenty year old would never walk, dress or care for himself again and he would never again have the body of an athlete. But his athletic mind and his searching soul made him soar as a person with a dream and a mission. His determination, skill, wit and patience would become the signature trademark of this friar, priest, son, brother, uncle, cousin, friend and teacher.

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The Augustinian • Spring 2014

E. Atkinson, O.S.A.

The Constitutions of the Order of Saint Augustine have a provision for temporary vows to be granted when there is danger of death. Given the gravity of Bill’s condition, Father Krupa asked Bill if he wished to pronounce his temporary vows in the Order; Bill gave a positive response that he did, and also realized that he was in danger of death at the time. He repeated the words of a brief profession formula, whispering afterwards that he was happy in the knowledge that he now had vows. For the next four days, Brother Bill remained in critical condition. He contracted pneumonia, with high fevers and are said to have been heroic examples of faith and trust in the will of God. It is said that when he was most critical, his mother stood by him, saying “breathe Bill.”

“Everybody (at Magee Rehabilitation Hospital) was very kind to him, a fact that began to bother Atkinson...all he was doing was taking...gradually he started to accept the services of people with the idea he would somehow return the favors, that he would somehow be useful again. From that time on, I began to put my life back together again,” he said.”

— Catholic Twin Circle, February 1974

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If you have a story about Father Bill, share it with us at: Father Bill’s Cause

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It is believed that Bill Atkinson is the first quadriplegic to be ordained. This required a formal petition from the Prior Provincial of the Province and his Council to the Pope to override the Canon Law (1917 Code Canon 984, n.2 [the irregularity ex defectu from bodily defect]), demonstrating his life, development, health and abilities for the Holy Father to decide upon Bill Atkinson's suitability for Holy Orders.

Here's an excerpt from Father Cassel's June 1973 petition for Ordination, "The Case of William E. Atkinson, O.S.A."

"During his time at Saint Mary's Hall, he found time and interest each year to coach an intramural football team and intramural baseball team, to be elected chairman of the entire "Sports Committee" of the Seminary; he worked a full day a week at Valley Forge Army Hospital with the young soldiers paralyzed in the Vietnam War. He was able to do this work without any assistance, other than being driven to and from the hospital. He was able to travel throughout the hospital on his own because of his motorized wheelchair. During this time and up to the present, he has found time to teach a weekly CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) class at a local parish, to correspond with many other paralyzed persons through the use of an electric typewriter. He has led three retreats for three separate classes at Monsignor Bonner High School in Philadelphia. On several occasions he has been a guest lecturer at Villanova. He supervises sports activities at a local parish on weekends...In fact, the various local chapters which have considered his case have been extremely praiseworthy of his spiritual, religious and fraternal development."

In August 8, 1973, a Western Union Telegram came with the simple words: "Atkinson dispensation granted."

"With the life of this extraordinary young man in view, my Council and I therefore humbly beg you, Most Holy Father, to carefully consider the case of William E. Atkinson, O.S.A., with a view toward his Ordination."

— Father Harry A. Cassel, O.S.A., Prior Provincial of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova

On February 2, 1974, William E. Atkinson became the first known quadriplegic to be ordained to the priesthood. Nine hundred people attended the Mass, with twelve Augustinians concelebrating with John Cardinal Krol. One person who was not there was Father Bill's mother, Mary Connelly Atkinson, who passed away shortly after attending his ordination to the diaconate in October of 1973. Asked to comment to local reporters about the impact this loss would have on his ordination, Bill replied “I don’t know, you might say that she’ll have the best seat in the house.”

It’s hard to imagine the joy of Father Bill, the Augustinians, his family and the community as he was ordained, for it was truly a shared victory, a triumph of a cross suffered and carried by so many to see him become a priest that day and for eternity.

"The priesthood is not a gift to be offered to an individual out of sympathy...Father Atkinson has no limitation and his contributions can not only equal, but can surpass any priest who is engaged in active ministry...thus he enters the priesthood even as Christ did, not to be served but to serve."

— Remarks of John Cardinal Krol on the ordination of Father Bill, addressed to the assembly after Mass, before giving the Apostolic Blessing.

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It’s hard to imagine the joy of Father Bill, the Augustinians, his family and the community as he was ordained, for it was truly a shared victory, a triumph of a cross suffered and carried by so many to see him become a priest that day and for eternity.
All of you are drawn here today by one single element, and that element is not me, but the love you have shown me… that love comes from God and it is a love that renews people, a love that transforms people and, ultimately, a love that unifies people.”

— Father Bill Atkinson, O.S.A.

former vocation director from his first Mass.

On February 3, 1974, a Mass of Thanksgiving was concelebrated at the Villanova University Field House. The tone of the Mass and the music was much more relaxed than the Ordination Mass the day before. Music selections reflected the Vietnam War years, with many contemporary, preliturgical music roles.

CONTEMPORARY SELECTIONS, INCLUDING JOHN LENNON’S, “GIVE PEACE A CHANCE;” AND THE EDWIN HAWKINS SINGERS’ VERSION OF “O HAPPY DAY.”

RELAXED THAN THE ORDINATION MASS THE DAY BEFORE. MUSIC SELECTIONS REFLECTED THE VIETNAM WAR YEARS, WITH MANY CONTEMPORARY, PRE-LITURGICAL MUSIC RULES.

THE STRENGTH OF OTHERS

“Taught me to Live, not just to Cope with their Love they gave me Hope”

FROM A POEM BY FATHER BILL ATKINSON, O.S.A.

On Saturdays, 50-75 people would pack into the shore house where Father Bill celebrated Mass. Here and at home Father could be found watching sports, playing cards, watching Jeopardy, working cryptograms and crossword puzzles. He amazed people by solving intricate jigsaw puzzles by telling the person who worked with him exactly where to place the pieces. He was an avid reader, he loved music and had his own way of dancing in his wheelchair. He wrote poems and played chess games long distance with friends.

Father’s health was always an issue over the years, as he would have bouts with bed sores and breathing issues. When he was healthy he was at full steam. In his later years at Bonner, as he approached the age of 60, his stamina was less than it had been, but he was still capable of teaching a limited class schedule and attending to all of his beloved extracurricular activities.

In his final years he lost some of that energy – he could get really tired. Father Denny tells one story of his later years. “Bill always enjoyed the slower section of seniors, the section that within a year most were on probation. He always wanted one of those sections. I would always make a point of walking past his room every day. Father loved the sun and he loved to sit in the sunbeams in a room. On this particular day, I’m approaching his classroom and I hear not a sound. I actually thought I’d find no one was in the room. As I get to the room, there he is, he’s in the sunbeam by the window sound asleep. One of the kids says to me ‘Shhh, Father’s sleepin.’ Not a sound. 28 kids and not a sound! If he had been awake, there would have been a lot of sound. He would have been telling this one to sit down, this one to stay quiet, but not today. I stepped out of the room and I got teary-eyed. I thought wow, it’s so much more important than what’s in that text book...they’ve learned Christian charity, keeping an eye on him.”

Many friars who have been stationed in one place and have been asked to move experience painful emotions and Father Bill was no different. He went through all the rituals of the end of the year, along with a party for him and graduation. He seemed fine and was looking forward to working with Villanova students, but fell sick the day after graduation and was critical in the hospital for next three months.

Father was well enough to come home to the monastery, but was unable to take on the position at Campus Ministry. On the afternoon of September 15, 2006, Father William E. Atkinson passed away with family, friars and friends at his side. Father was in serious and critical condition in the morning, but this had happened before and he pulled out of it. However, this day seemed different to the family who started to worry that this would be a day where he would not recover. And so it was that day.

His funeral liturgy was celebrated on Tuesday, September 19, 2006 at Saint Thomas of Villanova Church, Villanova Pa. and he was buried the following morning in the Augustinian section of Calvary Cemetery, West Conshohocken, Pa.

“I’m going to leave Father Bill’s two words. Not a sound. 28 kids and not a sound!” –Mark Purcell, West Chester, taken from a message left on the funeral home site.

We encourage you to go online to become a member of the fatherbillatkinsonguild.org.

If you are willing to share photos or video footage of Father Bill, please contact Father Billy Cause:

Augustinian Provincial Offices
P.O. Box 340
Villanova, PA 19085
or e-mail us at: guild@fatherbillatkinsonguild.org

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His funeral liturgy was celebrated on Tuesday, September 19, 2006 at Saint Thomas of Villanova Church, Villanova Pa. and he was buried the following morning in the Augustinian section of Calvary Cemetery, West Conshohocken, Pa.
On December 8, 2015, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis opened the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, which will end with the Solemnity of Christ the King, November 20, 2016.

The pure joy with which Francis proclaims this encounter of the church with its people and with Jesus is infectious. “The extraordinary year is itself a gift of grace—to convert oneself and perform works of mercy. This is the driving force of this Jubilee Year. Let us allow God to surprise us. He never tires of casting open the doors of his heart and of repeating that he loves us and wants to share his love with us. From the heart of the Trinity, that he loves us and wants to share his love with us. From the depths of the mystery of God, the pure joy with which Francis introduced the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, produced by fertile soil to meet the needs of this present life...but how disappointed he was over certain other trees which failed.” — Saint Augustine, Confessions 13. 25, 38

The corporal and spiritual works of mercy are actions we can perform that extend God’s compassion and mercy to those in need.

“Merciful like the Father”

In his address for Lent, 2016, Pope Francis said of these kind acts by which we help our neighbors with their material and physical needs:

Feed the hungry
Give drink to the thirsty
Clothe the naked
Shelter the homeless
Visit the sick
Visit the imprisoned
Bury the dead

It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God’s mercy. Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples. Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy.” — Pope Francis

THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

are these kind acts by which we help our neighbors with their material and physical needs:

Feed the hungry
Give drink to the thirsty
Clothe the naked
Shelter the homeless
Visit the sick
Visit the imprisoned
Bury the dead

THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

are acts of compassion by which we help our neighbors with their emotional and spiritual needs:

Comfort the afflicted
Instruct the ignorant
Admonish sinners
Forgive offenses
Counsel the doubtful
Bear wrongs patiently
Pray for the living and the dead

“Merciful like the Father”

In his address for Lent, 2016, Pope Francis said of these kind acts by which we help our neighbors with their emotional and spiritual needs:

Consoling the doubtful
Instruct the ignorant
Admonish sinners
Comfort the afflicted
Forgive offenses
Bear wrongs patiently
Pray for the living and the dead

“ ‘The practice of pilgrimage has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the journey each of us makes in this life. Similarly, to reach the Holy Door in Rome or in any other place in the world, everyone, each according to his or her ability, will have to make a pilgrimage. May pilgrimaging be an impetus to conversion: by crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, we will find the strength to embrace God’s mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us.”

Pope Francis

HOLY DOORS

The Holy Door of Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome is only opened for Jubilee Years and has been closed since 2000, when the last Jubilee Year closed. The idea of the Holy Door symbolically represents a special path of mercy available only while the Jubilee is open.

Unlike previous Jubilee Years, Pope Francis has made Holy Doors available in cities all over the world, to give the faithful every opportunity to pass through the door and access a spiritual indulgence. Holy Doors in the Philadelphia area are located at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter & Paul and Shrines within the Archdiocese.

Consequently, the Augustinian National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia, is one of the five Shrines in the Philadelphia Archdiocese to be granted a Holy Door. On December 16, 2015, the Holy Door at the Saint Rita Shrine Chapel beneath the main church was opened. The door is not the main entrance to the chapel, but a rarely used door, in accordance with the directive that the Holy Door be an optional entrance. Father Joe Gentile, O.S.A., Pastor and Shrine Director says “The idea is that people choose to walk through the door; they don’t have to use it to access the building or chapel. We have decorated the Holy Door with large poster pictures of Saint Rita (patroness of forgiveness and reconciliation) and Saint Augustine (model of conversion), along with pictures of the Holy Door of Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome. Walking through the door is a ritual whereby worshippers receive a plenary indulgence absolving them of the temporal punishment due to sin if they walk through the Door of Mercy, attend the sacrament of reconciliation, receive Holy Communion, pray for the intentions of the Pope, and show mercy.

You are invited to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Door at the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia, Philadelphia, Pa.

Go to www.saintritashrine.org for more information.

THE AUGUSTINIAN SPRING 2016
**Augustinian Saints and Blessed of Mercy**

**PRAY FOR US!**

Rita of Cascia bears witness to the act of forgiving offenses and bearing the wrongs she suffered with patience and trust in God. When her husband, Paolo, was murdered due to a family rivalry, Rita was left with two young sons. While social pressures decreed that her sons avenge Paolo’s death, Rita expressed forgiveness and prayer that her sons would not seek revenge, prayers that were unanswered. After losing both sons in death, with no family, she sought to be admitted to the convent of Augustinian nuns at Cascia. Her initial requests were denied. She forged a signed peace agreement between her husband’s family and supporters and those of his assassins. Persisting in her request to join the sisters, she gained admittance and lived the rest of her life in prayer and Christian works of mercy. 

Nicholas of Tolentino was a devoted practitioner of prayer for the faithful departed. He is reputed to have seen a vision of an Augustinian friar he knew, lamenting his time in purgatory, urging Nicholas to say Mass for him and to pray for all souls in purgatory. Nicholas earned the title “Patron Saint of the Souls in Purgatory,” conferred by Pope Leo XIII. The latter part of Nicholas’ life was spent in Tolentino, Italy, where he was a noted confessor and ministered among the poor, and the sick and infirm. He was known in his monastery for his compassion towards his religious brothers, as well as to all those in need. Love of God and love of neighbor were a hallmark of his ministry as an Augustinian friar. Canonized by Pope Eugene IV in 1441, Nicholas was the first member of the Order of Saint Augustine to be canonized.

Magdalene of Nagasaki was a stalwart example of a committed Christian, spreading the faith by word and deed. Born in 1611 near Nagasaki, Magdalene devoted herself to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In 1615, the latter part of Nicholas’ life was spent in Tolentino, Italy, where he was a noted confessor and ministered among the poor, and the sick and infirm. He was known in his monastery for his compassion towards his religious brothers, as well as to all those in need. Love of God and love of neighbor were a hallmark of his ministry as an Augustinian friar. Canonized by Pope Eugene IV in 1441, Nicholas was the first member of the Order of Saint Augustine to be canonized.

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**“Our prayer also extends to the saints and blessed ones who made divine mercy their mission in life.”**

**Pope Francis**

**Blessed Stephen Bellesini**

Stephen Bellesini was a benefactor to the poor and an excellent corporal and spiritual caregiver, to both novices and parishioners under his care. His religious house was suppressed and in 1618, he was forced from his monastery and religious life. Employed as a teacher, he displayed great success in educating and caring for poor children in Trent, and was appointed as Superintendent of Schools. He resigned eventually, making his way to Rome to resume his life as a friar and served the Order of Saint Augustine as master of novices in several houses. In the last years of his life, as pastor in Genazzano, he cared for the sick and dying of his parish, concerning himself with their corporal as well as their spiritual needs. Especially devoted to the poor, the sick and dying, he himself became ill as he ministered to victims of an epidemic. He was beatified by Pope Pius X in 1904.

**Saint Rita of Cascia**

**Saint Thomas of Villanova**

Thomas of Villanova, a Spanish saint of the 16th century and the inspiration for this Province’s name, was known as “The Father of the Poor.” Born into a family of means, he earned a Master’s degree at the University of Alcala and taught there. In time, he was offered a position at the prestigious University of Salamanca, where the Augustinians had a monastery. Instead of taking the teaching position, he entered the monastery there. Emperor Charles V nominated him to the See of Valencia; in his capacity as Bishop, Thomas founded a seminary, established boarding schools, helped young women with marriage dowries and served orphans, both educating and feeding them. Before dying, he gave away all his possessions to those in need. A prolific preacher, he left hundreds of sermons. Thomas was canonized by Pope Alexander VII in 1658.

**Saint Nicholas of Tolentino**

**Saint Thomas of Villanova**

**Saint Magdalene of Nagasaki**

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**Blessed Maria Teresa Fasce**

Maria Teresa Fasce was a woman devoted to Saint Rita of Cascia. As an active youth in her parish, she instructed children in the catechism. Like Rita of Cascia, Maria Giovanna asked to be admitted to the convent at Cascia and was denied, until her Augustinian confessor, Father Mariano Ferriello, petitioned on her behalf. She was finally admitted in 1906. In 1920, she was elected abbess, a position to which she was re-elected nine times. She accomplished great things, building an orphanage for girls, providing for their spiritual needs as well as their spiritual needs. She spread devotion to Saint Rita with a publication, and she was instrumental in building a new church, where pilgrims could come, around which a seminary, a hospital and a retreat house eventually rose. She herself was continuously burdened by physical ailments, yet despite her great sufferings, she died peacefully in 1947 and was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1997.

These are among Augustinian Saints and Blesseds who performed spiritual or corporal works of mercy and serve as fine examples to us.
Donald F. Reilly, O.S.A., Receives Saint Rita Peace Award with the Co-founder of Philadelphia’s Siloam Ministry

Father Donald Reilly, O.S.A., and Sister Bernadette Kinniry, R.S.M., co-founders of the Siloam ministry in Philadelphia, which provides services for those either infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS, were guests by the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia, in Philadelphia. The award was presented at a banquet held in April 2016.

Joseph Murray, O.S.A., Ordained to the Diaconate in Chicago

Brother Joseph Murray, O.S.A., of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova was ordained to the diaconate on Saturday, January 2, 2016, at Saint Rita Church in Chicago, by Augustinian Bishop Robert Prevost of Chiclayo, Perú. Brother Joe was ordained in a bi-lingual liturgy together with Brother Carlos Medina of the California Province and Brother Richie Mercado of the Midwest Province. All three deacons will now complete their theological studies and prepare for ordination to the priesthood later this year.

Solemn Profession in Vicariate of Japan

Following their annual retreat, friars of the Vicariate of Japan celebrated the solemn profession of Brother John Fotoshi Matsuo, O.S.A., on February 20, 2016. Pictured, Row 1: Brother Andrew Takashi Akakura, O.S.A.; Father Peter Francis Mitamura Toyama, O.S.A.; Brother John Fotoshi Matsuo, O.S.A.; Father Thomas Hiyonuki Shihata, O.S.A.; Father Thomas Masaki Imado, O.S.A.; and Father Michael Hilden, O.S.A. Row 2: Father Peter Teruyas Hirano, O.S.A.; Father Jesus M. Dallo, O.S.A.; Father Francis Park Tae-Kyoung, O.S.A.; (from the Delegation of Korea); Brother Francisco Salesio Yang Jo-Hoon, O.S.A.; (from the Delegation of Korea); Father Anthony Kiyoago Yamano, O.S.A.; Father Charles B. Pumpono, O.S.A.; and Brother Francis Masaya Ide, O.S.A.

Gathering of Augustinian Bishops in Rome

Coinciding with the closing of the special year dedicated to Consecrated Life, a meeting was held from February 1 to 3, in Rome, of 15 of the 19 Augustinian bishops who presently serve the Church. Pictured, Row 1: Bishop Dominico Berni, O.S.A.; Cardinal Prospero Grech, O.S.A.; Prior General, Alejandro Moral, O.S.A.; Archbishop José Domingo Ulloa, O.S.A. (Emeritus of Panama); Bishop Mariano Moreno, O.S.A.; (Emeritus of Guatemala, Argentina); Bishop Julián García Centeno, O.S.A.; (Emeritus of Equador, Peru). Row 2: Bishop Giovanni Scanavino, O.S.A.; (Emeritus of Oviedo-Extremadura, Italy); Bishop Domenico Berri, O.S.A.; Cardinal Prospero Grech, O.S.A.; Bishop Alberto Bochatey, O.S.A.; (Auxiliary of La Plata, Argentina); Bishop Michael Campbell, O.S.A.; (Lancaster, England); Bishop Manuel Ochoegavía, O.S.A.; (Colón-Guna Yala, Panama); Luis Marín de San Martín, O.S.A., Curia. Row 3: Bishop John Neyzing, O.S.A.; (Kano, Nigeria); Patriarch Villalla, O.S.A., Curia; Anthony Banks, O.S.A., Curia; Bishop Daniel Farley, O.S.A.; Chabacanas, Peru; Joseph Farrell, O.S.A., Curia; Edward Dalong, O.S.A., Curia; Frana Klein, O.S.A., Curia; and John Flynn, O.S.A., Curia.

ANNIVERSARIES 2016

ANNIVERSARY OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

50 YEARS

Albert F. MacPherson, O.S.A.
William F. Waterer, O.S.A.
Anthony M. Griswold, O.S.A.
Edward J. Knight, O.S.A.
Michael J. Hilden, O.S.A.
Francis X. Devlin, O.S.A.
Michael F. DiGregorio, O.S.A.

25 YEARS

Peter Francis Mitamura Toyama, O.S.A.
Joseph A. Reyes, O.S.A.
Luiz A. Vera, O.S.A.
Stephen M. Curry, O.S.A.

ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION

50 YEARS

John F. McAtee, O.S.A.
John F. Doeby, O.S.A.

25 YEARS

James D. Paradis, O.S.A.
Joseph L. Farrell, O.S.A.
The Augustinian Heritage Room: Now Open On Weekdays 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM!

The Augustinian Heritage Room, located in Saint Thomas of Villanova Monastery, on the campus of Villanova University, houses artifacts and documents that detail the history of the Order of Saint Augustine in the United States, beginning with the arrival of Augustinian Friar Matthew Carr from Ireland in April 1796. He immediately set out raising funds and was able to purchase land in July of that same year, and construction began on Saint Augustine Church, the first foundation of the Augustinians in the new, post-revolution United States. This “American Province,” eventually became the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova.

Documents detail Carr’s arrival, the establishment of a province, the expansion as land was purchased from the Rudolph estate, west of Philadelphia, which became the Augustinian’s second foundation in the United States, Villanova. Part of the collection is an art that ran in the Philadelphia Herald paper in 1844, promoting a St. Thomas of Villanova College, providing costs, payment terms, and programs offered, either “classical and scientific, or purely mercantile.”

The Augustinian Heritage Room is open to individuals or small groups of 20 or less.

HOURS
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Monday through Friday
Private tours may also be arranged.

CONTACT INFO:
communications@augustinian.org
or Fr. Dennis McGowan, O.S.A.
610-519-7500

The Augustinian Heritage Room is open to individuals or small groups of 20 or less.

A timeline of the growth and expansion of the Province, coupled with historical references to developments in the United States, located in the window wells, along with images and posters on the walls, place the presence and growth of the Augustinian Order in context with the development of the United States of America. Other artifacts include the mitre and crozier of two Augustinians who served as bishops: Thomas Gallery served in Hartford, Connecticut and William Jones served as the first bishop of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Viewing the timeline, the visitor can see the expansion of the Province to other areas in the country, Chicago in the Midwest, and San Diego in the West, which led to the creation of new provinces; the establishment of Merrimack College in Massachusetts following World War II, and the history surrounding the missions of this Province, starting with the first mission to Cuba, as well as taking on a mission in Japan.

Visitors are welcome to tour the Augustinian Heritage Room to learn about the history of the Augustinians in the United States and how their presence developed and grew as the United States grew and expanded.

Artifacts in the collection include a priest’s stole, which had been used in 1590 at the first blessing of Saint Augustine Church in the city of Philadelphia, which was stolen in 1814 when the Church was destroyed by fire during nativist riots, and returned twenty years later. Also among the items to be seen is the “Sister Bell” to the Liberty Bell. This bell, which hung in the Pennsylvania statehouse (Independence Hall), was transferred to Saint Augustine Church by the city of Philadelphia, and hung in its steeple, until fire destroyed the church and damaged the bell in the riots. The bell was saved, recast and moved to Villanova. From 1847 to 1917, it rang to alert students to chapel services and classes. Saint Augustine Church also housed one of the best theological libraries at the time and books that were saved from fire are also part of the collection.

Books Saved from Fire During Riots at Saint Augustine Church

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Sister Bell to the Liberty Bell

“SISTER BELL” TO THE LIBERTY BELL

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Looking Ahead

Mid-Chapter of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova

Friars of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova will hold a Mid-Chapter at Villanova University from June 12, 2016, until June 17, 2016.

Ordination to the Priesthood of Joseph A. Murray, O.S.A.

Following the Mid-Chapter, Brother Joe Murray, O.S.A., will be ordained to the priesthood at the Saint Thomas of Villanova Church (campus) on Saturday, June 18, 2016, at 10:00 A.M.

Tenth Anniversary Mass for Father Bill Atkinson, O.S.A.

September 15, 2016, marks the tenth anniversary of the death of Father Bill Atkinson. A Mass will be celebrated on September 15, 2016, in the Church of Saint Thomas of Villanova (campus). Reflections will be served following the Mass.

Gary N. McCloskey, O.S.A., Contributes Two Chapters to a Book on Thomas Berry, C.P.

In this book about Passionist priest Thomas Berry, an ecologist and protege of the Jesuit, Teilhard de Chardin, edited by Elisabeth Ferrero, Father Gary N. McCloskey, O.S.A., has contributed two chapters (“Thomas Berry in Italy: Relationship, Place and Story” and “Reflective Thinking about Place as Part of a Curriculum for Ecological Studies”), From Preem in Terris Press, the book is available at Amazon.

Sunday Homilies Now on Augustinian.org Website

Each week, a homily composed by a friar for the upcoming Sunday, including information about the Sunday readings, is posted to the homilies page on our website. To read these homilies, please visit our webpage at the following link:

http://www.augustinian.org/homilies

Stay on top of news and events from the Augustinian world—sign up for Augustinian E-News at www.augustinian.org/enews-signup
**Following the vow of obedience, friars find themselves called to where they are needed. Each issue of The Augustinian hopes to connect you with some familiar faces as we provide brief updates on friars serving throughout the Province. Watch here to track down that old classmate, pastor, chemistry teacher, chaplain, philosophy professor, co-worker or friend.**

**IN PARADISUM**

The following friars are called home to God.

**George P. Lawless, O.S.A.**

Born: 3/9/1919  
First profession: 9/10/1949  
Ordination: 1/4/1956  
Died: 3/9/2016

George Patrick Lawless was born on September 26, 1919, in Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was the son of George P. Lawless and Margaret J. McCarthy, and one of five brothers and three sisters. He was baptized on October 5, 1919, at Our Mother of Consolation Church in Chestnut Hill and attended Our Mother of Consolation Parish School (1933-1943), and Augustinian Academy, Staten Island, New York, as a postulant (1945-1947). He was received into the Order as a novice on September 9, 1947, and following his formation at Good Counsel Novitiate, New Hamburg, New York, he professed simple vows on September 10, 1948. He then attended Villanova College, and received a BA in Philosophy (1952), having professed solemn vows on September 10, 1951. He went to Augustinian College, Washington, D.C., where he taught in the Religious Studies Department (1968-1975). During this time he attended Princeton Theological Seminary and received a ThM in Ecumenics and Ethics. In 1975 he was named prior of Augustinian College. He was assigned briefly, in 1979, to Saint John of Salographs Friary, Washington, D.C., and, in 1980 to the College Saint Mary, Rome, where he taught at the Augustinos, the Order’s Partriatic Institute (1980-2011). He received his doctorate from the Angelicum, Rome (1985). He also taught at the Angelicum as adjunct professor, and at the Gregorian University until 2005. In 2009, Father George received a Doctorate in Augustine Studies, honoris causa, from Merrick College, North Andover, Massachusetts. In January 2012, due to declining health, he returned to his home Province and was assigned to St. Thomas of Villanova Monastery, Villanova, Pa.

Father George was the author of many books and articles, and gave many retreats, conferences and workshops on Saint Augustine. His Rule, and his writings, always as articulate speaker, he was known for his skill for turning a phrase with flair and elegance, and bringing humor, through his speech, into even the most scholarly discussions and conversations. After an extended decline in health, Father George Lawless passed over to the Lord on Wednesday afternoon, March 9, 2016, in his room at Saint Thomas of Villanova Monastery, Villanova, Pa., in his eighty-fifth year and the sixty-eighth of his religious profession.

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**George was ordained to the priesthood on February 4, 1936, at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C., by Bishop John McNamara.**

Father George was assigned to teach at Augustinian Academy, Staten Island, during the 1956-1957 academic year. He was transferred in 1957 to Saint Mary's Hall, Villanova, and in 1958 became a member of the Saint Thomas Monastery community there. He taught at Villanova University and also studied at the University of Pennsylvania, where he received an MA in Classical Studies (1963). In 1968 he was appointed to Our Mother of Good Counsel Monastery and Merrick College, where he taught in the Religious Studies Department (1968-1975). During this time he attended Princeton Theological Seminary and received a ThM in Ecumenics and Ethics. In 1975 he was named prior of Augustinian College. He was assigned briefly, in 1979, to Saint John of Salographs Friary, Washington, D.C., and, in 1980 to the College Saint Mary, Rome, where he taught at the Augustinos, the Order’s Partriatic Institute (1980-2011). He received his doctorate from the Angelicum, Rome (1985). He also taught at the Angelicum as adjunct professor, and at the Gregorian University until 2005. In 2009, Father George received a Doctorate in Augustine Studies, honoris causa, from Merrick College, North Andover, Massachusetts. In January 2012, due to declining health, he returned to his home Province and was assigned to St. Thomas of Villanova Monastery, Villanova, Pa.

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May 15, 2016
Reception at Saint Augustine Parish, Andover, Mass.
following 11:30 A.M. Mass

August 19, 2016
Cascia Classic Golf Outing
11:00 A.M.

October 16, 2016
Saint Thomas of Villanova Leaderhsip and Saint Augustine Legacy Societies
Mass and Brunch
Private tour of the Augustinian Heritage Room will be available.

November 2016
Cocktail Party
Overbrook Country Club
Villanova, Pa.

April 2017
New York City Cocktail Party

Province Launches Leadership Giving Society

By Madonna Sutter
Director of Advancement

When I think of leadership I think of individuals who inspire and motivate others. They think big, set a tone and create a culture. Leaders often influence others by their character, humility and example.

The Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova is pleased to announce a new leadership giving society—named in honor of our patron, Saint Thomas of Villanova. This society recognizes donors who provide gifts of $1,000 or more in support of the Augustinians. The members of the Saint Thomas of Villanova Leadership Society play a key role in creating a strong, sustainable, annual source of revenue that will respond to meet the needs of the Augustinians today and in the future.

It is fitting that we name this society in honor of Saint Thomas of Villanova who was thoroughly Augustinian in his choice of life, spirituality and in his ministry, especially as a bishop and leader of the Church. He demonstrated the power of Augustinian leadership, reform and renewal and by his own example, became a symbol of hope in the midst of a seemingly hopeless situation.

While creating strong leadership giving is quite important, I don’t want to discount the significance that gifts under $1,000 play to create a robust annual giving initiative. To that end, we have established the Saint Monica Loyalty Society, named in honor of Saint Augustine’s mother, which recognizes donors who make gifts three years consecutively under $1,000. If you have given to the Province for two years consecutively, you will receive an invitation to join this new loyalty society. If you’ve already given three years consecutively, you will receive a letter welcoming you into this Society.

Please take a moment to think about how the Augustinians have influenced your life. Consider becoming an inaugural member of the Saint Thomas of Villanova Leadership Society to inspire and motivate others by your example. Think big, set a tone and help us to create a culture of leadership giving that will allow the Augustinians to realize their vision for the future.

Members of the Saint Thomas of Villanova Leadership Society will be invited to the Celebration of Mass followed by brunch and a private tour of the Augustinian Heritage Room on Sunday, October 16, 2016.

Saint Nicholas of Tolentine Circle ($25,000+)

A model of inspiration to this day, Saint Nicholas exemplifies the balance between Augustinian life and ministry: love of God and love of neighbor; prayer and good works; contemplation combined with generous service.

Our Mother of Good Counsel Circle ($10,000-$24,999)

Mary, mother of Jesus, is even more blessed for being his disciple. She represents a deep spiritual, constant truth as the first disciple of her son presenting him to us as our teacher, our way, our truth and our life.

Saint Rita of Cascia Circle ($5,000-$9,999)

Peacemaker and reconciler, Saint Rita of Cascia exemplifies faith and grace in the midst of life’s challenges. She reminds us that nothing is impossible with God.

Blessed Stephen Bellesini Circle ($2,500-$4,999)

An extraordinary example of fidelity, Blessed Stephen exemplified perseverance in the midst of trials and generously spent himself in the service of God’s people, especially the poor and the infirm.

Clare of Montefalco Circle ($1,000-$2,499)

Endowed with extraordinary gifts of grace, Saint Claire was admired for her deep spiritual perception. She reminds us that holiness is the work of grace and not of human effort.

Saint Thomas of Villanova Leadership Giving Society

Giving Levels

Saint Thomas of Villanova Society Co-Chairs

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SAINT THOMAS OF VILLANOVA LEADERSHIP GIVING SOCIETY BENEFITS

• The Augustinian Magazine
• Augustinian E-News
• Inside the Province
(Communication from the Prior Provincial)
• Special events hosted by the Prior Provincial
• Recognition in the Province’s Annual Report
• An opportunity to support the friars’ way of life
• Remembrance in the daily Masses of the Augustinians

For membership materials or more information, please contact Madonna Sutter, Director of Advancement, at (610) 527-3330, x265 or madonna.sutter@augustinian.org
Augustinian Mass cards are spiritual gifts that allow loved ones and friends to share in the Masses and Prayers offered by the Augustinians in the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova.

Our beautifully designed cards can be used in sympathy or in celebration of a birthday or anniversary. Donations received for the enrollment benefit the care of elderly friars and the training of future Augustinians.

TO ORDER: fill out the online form at www.augustinian.org/mass-cards/ or call us at 610-527-3330 ext. 240.

Please note that we will send the Mass cards directly to you, for you to fill out and give to the recipient.