P. 4 FANA Convocation 2017: Discerning the Future

In June 2017, the Federation of Augustinians of North America (FANA), comprised of the Provinces in North America and representatives of the Vicariate in Peru, convened at Villanova University. Each provincial gave a review of his individual provinces and the challenges each face. Friars reviewed the progress of the Federation to date and discussed opportunities where the provinces can collaborate in the future. Simultaneously, the Vicariate of Japan held a convocation of its members to likewise look to the future and determine how they can best approach the challenges faced by their community.

P. 8 Luther & the Reformation: Saint Augustine and the Augustinian Order

The Augustinians will hold an international congress in Rome commemorating the Reformation and the roles of Augustinian Friar Martin Luther, Saint Augustine and the Augustinian Order. In an interview, Prior General of the Augustinians, Alejandro Moral Antón, O.S.A., discusses why the congress is significant and what he hopes it may accomplish and bring to the work of ecumenism. A review of the life of Martin Luther as an Augustinian and his role in the Reformation follows.

P. 12 The Inaugural Saint Augustine Medal Dinner

On the evening of April 27, 2017, at a dinner in N.Y.C., the Inaugural Saint Augustine Medal was presented to Patty and Jay Wright by Michael DiGregorio, O.S.A., on behalf of the Province’s Friars, recognizing the Wrights for the way in which they have consistently promoted the Augustinians and Augustinian values of truth, unity and love. Father Rob Hagan, O.S.A., reflects on the special evening and the honored recipients of the Medal and pictures recall the evening and the event.

P. 16 The Diocesan Cause for Father Bill Atkinson, O.S.A., Is Opened

Very appropriately, on the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Augustine, Archbishop Charles Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., presided at a liturgy, which preceded an historic ceremony, during which the Cause for Father Bill Atkinson, O.S.A., was opened and those charged with the task of investigating the life of Father Bill took their oaths.
Dear Friends,

The photo you see on the cover of this issue of The Augustinian conveys well, I believe, a characteristic of our religious community’s identity, history and spirit: we are people on the move.

At our founding many centuries ago, we Augustinians were caught up into a dynamic, new initiative in the Church, known as the Mendicant Movement. One feature of the communities that comprised this movement was that they were marked by itinerancy. Their members were to be free of the stability that was proper to a monastic way of life, in order to be available to pick up and go where they were most needed. This characteristic is clearly evident today in the movement of individual friars from one community to another, which often occurs in our Province during the summer months. It is also noticeable in the Province’s freedom to withdraw from certain ministries or specific locations due to changing needs, and move into other ones elsewhere.

This year, in a special way, many friars from across North America exercised a bit of itinerancy, moving from one community to another, which often occurs in our Province during the summer months. It is also noticeable in the Province’s freedom to withdraw from certain ministries or specific locations due to changing needs, and move into other ones elsewhere.

A major step forward, too, was made this past Spring with the opening of the Diocesan Process of Canonization for Father Bill Atkinson. This event marked a significant advancement in our efforts to make Father Bill and his message more widely known, as the first North American Province to be represented by a friar who was canonized by Pope Francis. I am grateful to our readers—Augustinians and others—who encouraged me with their letters, reflections or articles for the magazine and contributed artwork and photography; Associate Communications Director, Kitty Sheridan; my colleagues here at the Provincial Office, at the Monastery/Augustinian Archives, at Villanova University and the design team at 28nine. I also thank the Catholic Press Association for their recognition with 18 CPA awards. I am grateful to our readers—Augustinians and others—who encouraged me with their kind comments.

I leave with so many people to thank: the three priors provincial whom I served, Father Michael Di Gregorio, O.S.A., Father Donald Reilly, O.S.A., Father Mickey Genovese, O.S.A., and our current Prior Provincial, Father Michael Di Gregorio, O.S.A.; all of the friars, especially those who proofed, wrote, designed, and produced this magazine; my colleagues here at the Provincial Office, at the Monastery/Augustinian Archives, at Villanova University and the design team at 28nine. I also thank the Catholic Press Association for their recognition with 18 CPA awards. I am grateful to our readers—Augustinians and others—who encouraged me with their kind comments.

Signing off from Villanova, Pennsylvania, I ask you to keep me in your prayers as I begin "My New Life Plan." I am grateful to our readers—Augustinians and others—who encouraged me with their kind comments.

God's blessings,

Michael F. Di Gregorio, O.S.A.
PRIOR PROVINCIAL
PROVINCE OF SAINT THOMAS OF VILLANOVA
The opening Mass of the Holy Spirit was celebrated by the Prior General, who later shared with us in the initial conference the movement of God’s Spirit in other provinces and circumsternions of the Order worldwide as, similarly, they strive to engage in conversations that foster greater collaboration among provinces. There followed a brief summary of the history and accomplishments of FANA since its inception in 2009 which was given by the Executive Director of the Federation, Father Gary McCloskey, O.S.A. His presentation gave the friars a springboard to launch the next stage of growth for the Federation and a reflection upon the achievements of FANA since its inception in 2009.

Subsequently, the three provincials, Father Michael Di Gregorio (Villanova), Father Bernard Sciana (Chicago, Canada, Peru), and Father Kevin Mullins (California), who together compose the FANA council, updated the membership of each province’s current challenges, sharing their perspectives concerning the on-going collaboration among provinces since the last convocation.

Guidance each day was given by Dr. Michael Bland, a clinical psychologist, who is familiar with the Augustinian way of life and the contemporary experiences of religious life in North America today. He spoke to the friars about the emotional stress and strain associated with change, loss, diminishment, and occasionally, the anxiety that can surface with an unknown future. Like so many aspects of contemporary life today, religious life is in a state of transformation, transition, growth, and movement wherein we prayerfully engage with the guidance of God’s Spirit.

One conviction gathered together men “young in initial formation” as well as men “young in heart in stages of their own on-going formation” from the ages of 23 to 87.

Men who had not seen one another for many years rejoiced with the opportunity to share old stories and remembrances of life together. They delighted hearing, “You haven’t changed a bit!” only to have it said much more loudly, “I SAW, YOU HAVEN’T CHANGED A BIT!”

When asked to reflect upon this experience various friars commented, such as: “I found this gathering to be filled with hope” and “It was challenging and at the same time comforting just to know that we are on our way together.” Others commented that the sessions were energizing, insightful, thought, and fulfilling. Many shared that our Morning and Evening prayers brought us to a moment of meditative reflection in which God’s presence seemed almost tangible within this gathering. We celebrated with the renewed remembrance of the courage of our founding friars who began this American endeavor, facing tremendous odds as they sought to minister to the early immigrant population while dealing with the anti-Catholic violence of the 19th century. Bus tours were provided for those friars who wanted to remember these early stages of Augustinian life in the Philadelphia area with visits to Old Saint Augustine’s Church, our first foundation in the United States, the historic buildings of colonial Philadelphia, and the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia. Tours were also provided for the campus of Villanova University, where many of the friars received their early religious formation and education. This was a particularly significant year to view the campus as our esteemed University, founded by the Augustinians in 1842, is celebrating its 175th anniversary.

Accepting the reality and challenges of life in a world today that is so divided, we can face the challenges of tomorrow with a unique sense of the importance of our communal life and ministry as we strive to live in harmony with one heart and mind on our way to God. We know that it is only the grace of God that has brought us thus far and which empowers us for the future. Some friars even went so far as to say that they had never felt a deeper sense of belonging to our fraternity and a special cohesiveness of purpose among us.

As I reflect further on the experience of the week, I am reminded of a quote from Saint Augustine’s Confessions. In Book 8, Saint Augustine says, “For a joy shared by many increases the happiness of each one.” — Saint Augustine

For a joy shared by many increases the happiness of each one. — Saint Augustine

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Several years ago, at the opening Mass of the General Chapter of the Order, celebrated in the Basilica of St. Augustine in Rome, Pope Francis in his homily urged all the friars to reflect upon the word “restless,” which, as we know, is forever associated with the restlessness of Augustine’s own heart and his search for Truth, Unity, and Love. Our convocation indeed touched that restless spirit in each of us as we embrace the challenges before us. Saint Augustine cautions in his Sermon 169 that if we become satisfied with what we are not yet, there is a danger that we may become so pleased with ourselves that in where we will remain. He encourages us to grow and go beyond where we are at present. He tells us to keep walking, keep moving forward and making progress. Within this fraternal convocation, we acknowledged that we desire to grow more in unity of mind and heart as brothers on our way to God and, together in union with all our brothers and sisters who serve with us, to be in touch with the restlessness of God who desires more of us in furthering the Kingdom. Among the many fruits of this convocation was the decision to continue the conversation at the next convocation of FANA which will be celebrated in the Basilica of St. Augustine, as we know, is forever associated with the restlessness of Augustine’s own heart and his search for Truth, Unity, and Love.

In order to respond to this specific challenge, we drew on the experience of the Planning Process that we had undertaken prior to the 2002 Provincial Chapter for a 30 months’ duration, particularly focusing on the mission statement and a list of chosen/prioritized ministries, two of the fruits of the said process, on all of which we reflected anew and then shared our comments and observations. In the end our conversations led to the decision to implement two initiatives: the formation of a team to promote vocations and the production of a DVD through which to appeal to different congregations of Augustinian Sisters in the Philippines in the hope that one or another congregation may be encouraged to collaborate with us by sending its Sisters to establish a community in Japan. That being said, perhaps what was more important is the broad consensus which has emerged among us that we could still make a difference by continuing to serve at our four parishes, while we remain open to new possibilities, which we owe to our younger members and to those who will be interested to join us. The gathering ended with a positive note that we will bring our ‘dreams’ with us when we meet again in the fall. Yes, small though we are, we, the Vicariate of Japan, are a resilient community which keeps on dreaming dreams, young and old.

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BY THOMAS MASAKI IMADA, O.S.A., VICARIATE SECRETARY

The Friars of the Vicariate of Japan gathered for their own Convocation at a Passionist retreat house in Fukuoka from June 12th through June 15th with an overnight stay at a hotel with an onsen, or hot spring, in Dazaifu, Fukuoka, at the very end, to add to the Japanese taste of the gathering. Our meeting was made possible thanks to the approval by Father Michael Di Gregorio, our Provincial, of a petition from the Vicariate membership to hold a separate convocation to discuss and plan for its own future.

A strong sense of community and camaraderie prevailed throughout the gathering and there was a spontaneity and openness in the way our conversation unfolded. The discussion and sharing proper started by Father Hiroyuki, our Vicar, calling us to reflect once again on the letter from the Prior General, Father Alejandro Moral Antón, O.S.A., which he had sent following his visitation in January, in particular on what he perceived as challenges facing the Vicariate, especially, the need to take “ownership of what will be by our younger friars.”

In order to respond to this specific challenge, we drew on the experience of the Planning Process that we had undertaken prior to the 2002 Provincial Chapter for a 30 months’ duration, particularly focusing on the mission statement and a list of chosen/prioritized ministries, two of the fruits of the said process, on all of which we reflected anew and then shared our comments and observations. In the end our conversations led to the decision to implement two initiatives: the formation of a team to promote vocations and the production of a DVD through which to appeal to different congregations of Augustinian Sisters in the Philippines in the hope that one or another congregation may be encouraged to collaborate with us by sending its Sisters to establish a community in Japan.

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**AN INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS**

**November 9, 2017 – November 11, 2017**

**At The Patristic Institute, Rome**

**LUTHER and THE REFORMATION: SAINT AUGUSTINE, and THE AUGUSTINIAN ORDER**

**AN INTERVIEW with THE PRIOR GENERAL of THE AUGUSTINIAN ORDER, FATHER ALEJANDRO MORAL ANTON, O.S.A.**

BY TEDDIE GALLAGHER

2017 marks the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, the start of which is traced to Martin Luther, who was an Augustinian Friar in Germany. Before the religious differences in Europe took hold, the Augustinians had many houses in Germany and the Low Countries (modern Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands). The effects of the Reformation on the Roman Catholic Church were to be felt by the Order of Saint Augustine, not just in Martin Luther’s Germany, but throughout Europe.

**What do you do as Augustinians offering during the Congress that will be of significant value to understanding the Protestant Reformation and the figure of Luther?**

One needs to understand that Luther is being formed in the Augustinian way, so his thoughts are coming from Saint Augustine and Saint Augustine was getting his thoughts from the letters of Saint Paul. Two important themes that Luther tapped into were grace and communion, which are very Augustinian themes. Luther was free in his interpretation of grace and communion, in line with Saint Augustine, more than, for example, Saint Thomas Aquinas, who took a more literal interpretation of God’s actions in our life through reason. Augustine is about the grace of God, the freedom we have to live as children of God, and Luther tapped into that to form his own theology. As Augustinians we are tapping in, not just to the thoughts of Martin Luther, but also to the thoughts of Saint Augustine.

**Do you think of Martin Luther as your Augustinian brother?**

I recognize Luther as my brother because he is a son of God, a child of God. In regards to an Augustinian Brother, one of the important things to remember is, as Augustinians, we were founded by Saint Augustine that ecumenism is the spirit of being one body of Christ. What are you doing at this Congress to help with ecumenism today?

**The work that we do as Augustinians through ecumenism comes from the three characteristics values of Augustine: Truth, Unity, Love...Fides, Unitas, Caritas. For Augustine, seeking the truth and the common search for truth was so important. Many times Augustine had to battle with religious sects to defend the truth of one’s understanding of God. Also, unity was very important for Augustine and as Augustinians, we base our common life on unity. The third value is  caritas, love. Above all things put on love. It’s love that will guide us together. The Church can learn from Saint Augustine that ecumenism is the spirit of being one body of Christ. Do you think this V Centenary opens possibilities that will connect us even further?**

Yes, I hope change can happen this year as we take the opportunity to reflect on what has taken place in the past. I also hope that the V Centenary offers opportunities to encounter one another, to meet with each other, to reflect, to dig as brothers and sisters, as Lutherans, as Catholics.

**What do you hope people will take away from the Congress?**

The way that we think about Lutheranism and ecumenism now is very different than it was even fifty years ago. So, we bring to this congress an updated understanding of what ecumenism is when we look at Luther and his search for God. I had a conversation with the Holy Father about this Congress and he is very happy we are having it. The Holy Father said it is important for all of us to come to an understanding of what Luther was a man in search of God....and to have an understanding of what that meant for Luther in his time period, that he was searching, just like all of us are in our own times.

**The V Centenary of Luther posting his 95 Theses marks the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation and the figure of the Church. Martin Luther was not able to do that. He sought reforms outside of the Church. Martin Luther was an Augustinian Friar in Germany. Before the religious differences in Europe took hold, the Augustinians had many houses in Germany and the Low Countries (modern Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands). The effects of the Reformation on the Roman Catholic Church were to be felt by the Order of Saint Augustine, not just in Martin Luther’s Germany, but throughout Europe. Martin Luther was born on November 10, 1483, to Hans and Margarete Luder (later Luther) in Eisleben, Saxony (Southeast Germany). Martin, one of seven children, had a strict Christian upbringing and was afforded a good education. His father, Hans, had aspirations for Martin to become a lawyer. Martin enrolled in the University of Erfurt in 1501, began his studies and earned a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy in 1505. Soon after he began studies in jurisprudence. In July 1505, following a visit to his parents, Martin was caught in a serious thunderstorm. Frightened for his life, he uttered a prayer and a vow, that if delivered safely through the storm, he would become a religious. To the dismay of his father, he abruptly quit his studies for the law. Faithful to the vow he made, he entered the Augustinian Monastery at Erfurt, Germany, later in July 1505. Thus, began the life of Martin Luther as an Augustinian Friar.

While completing his studies, Luther taught at the University of Erfurt, which was a member of the observant congregation. The “observant” congregations were so called as they followed a stricter regime than other houses, practicing a rule of asceticism, i.e., a regime that may have included self-denial, self-mortification, and abstinence. On April 3, 1507, Luther was ordained in Erfurt Cathedral and he said his first Mass in May 1507. In 1508, he was assigned to teach at the University of Wittemberg. An Augustinian house at Wittemberg had been founded mainly as a house for professors teaching there and also for students sent there to study from other houses in Germany. In 1509, he earned a Bachelor of Theology degree, and returned to Erfurt, where he was assigned as a teacher for candidates at the friary. **THE LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER 1483 – 1546**

**BY KITTY SHERIDAN**
At the time, there was a movement for reform among the Augustinians. In 1507, there was a decree from the Pope to unite all houses in northern Germany under the observantine congregation, but when Augustinian monasteries in the region were asked to unite, eight refused, among them, the monastery at Erfurt, whose members wanted to retain their independence from the other monasteries and also feared a laxness might be introduced at Erfurt if they unified. In 1510, Luther was selected as a delegate to go to Rome to present the view of the friars in opposition to this proposal to the Pope. While in Rome, Luther was disillusioned by the behavior he saw among clerics: a corruption in morals and an afflication towards luxuries. Despite his months in Rome, upon returning to Germany Martin proved to be sincere in his duties as a religious, a good teacher and student of scripture. In 1511, he returned to Wittenberg to teach and succeeded Johann von Staupitz as the chair of the bible. In October 1512, he was awarded a Doctor of Theology degree. Luther was a popular lecturer on scriptures, and many Augustinian Friars were students of Luther. As a young religious, it was evident that Luther's seriousness perplexed him, causing him great anxiety and fear for his salvation. He was ever aware of his failings, and wondered how the forgiveness of God was a certainty given his failings. Luther's superior of the monastery at Erfurt, Johann von Staupitz, was a pious friar and a talented administrator. He was also Luther's mentor and saw the torrent that afflicted Luther and advised him to unite himself with the wounds of Christ, in order to try to divert his concentration of his own failings and his fear of God's judgement of him. However, despite this advice, Luther was known to spend hours confessing what he saw as his failings and inability to be pleasing to God, gaining God's forgiveness.

LUTHER, HIS "95 THESSES" AND ITS AFTERMATH

Luther was delving more and more into his studies of scripture while teaching at the University. Over the next several years (1513-1518), he led lectures on the Psalms, the Pauline Epistles, Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. He eventually came to believe that scripture alone (sola scriptura), and proclaiming one's faith in Christ was what was necessary for salvation and this belief gave him hope and quelled the anxiety and fear of damnation. Luther remained faithful to his religious duties as a friar and at a Chapter in 1515, he was appointed vicar of two districts, Meißen and Thuringia. While he was teaching at Wittenberg, there was in Germany in 1516, a Dominican Friar, Johann Tetzel, selling "indulgences," in order to raise funds for the building of Saint Peter's Basilica. Luther was invited by the commercial approach allegedly taken by Tetzel "As soon as a coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs" and he wrote to the Bishop of Mainz and the Bishop of Magdeburg, decrying the practice approved by Pope Leo X, and he enclosed his “95 Theses.” When he heard no response, he published his “95 Theses” for academic discussion. When he posted his “95 Theses” to the castle church door in Wittenberg, was Luther's intention to cause a break from Rome? Likely not. Such an action was not unknown, as it was a method of posting topics to be debated. However, the “95 Theses” spread quickly, in part due to its printing. After posting his “95 Theses” in October 1517, Luther continued to teach at the University of Wittenberg.

In February 1518, the Vicar of the Augustinians, Gabriele della Volta, ordered von Staupitz to reprimand Luther. He also ordered Luther to attend the Chapter of the Observantine Congregation at Heidelberg in March 1518. Many of the friars attending became backers of Luther. In the fall 1518, the Church ordered Luther to Rome but relented, as Luther refused to leave Germany and proceedings against him were held at Augsburg.

LUTHER REFUSED TO GO TO ROME, SO PROCEEDINGS AGAINST HIM WERE HELD AT AUGSBURG.

Luther appeared before Cardinal Cajetan in October 1518. Cajetan had been told to have Luther recant his errors or he be arrested and brought to Rome. Luther however, refused to recant and with the aid of his supporters, he escaped back to Wittenberg. In June 1520, the Papal Bull, Exsurge Domini, declared 40 of Luther's theses heretical and in December 1520, Luther publicly burned a copy of the Bull. In 1521, he was excommunicated. In April of that year, Luther appeared before the Diet of Worms and again refused to recant. In May, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, declared Luther a public outlaw. In danger of arrest, Frederick the Wise staged a capture and for eleven months hid Luther at Wartburg castle. During this time, he began a translation of the New Testament into German, which was published the next year. Even von Staupitz realized that Luther's attacks were not only against abuses in the Church, but against the Church itself, and he expressly condemned Luther's teachings.

LUTHER'S REMAINS BEST IN THE CASTLE CHURCH AT MITTEMBERG, WHERE HE POSTED HIS 95 THESES.

In 1522, the ban on Luther was lifted and he returned to Wittenberg, where he continued to live in the Augustinian house and in 1524, he returned to teach at the University of Wittenberg. Although Luther had been excommunicated in 1521; it wasn't until October of 1524 that he finally discarded his Augustinian habit. In April 1525, he married Katharina von Bora, a former nun, with whom he had six children. In the Diet of Speyer in 1526, German princes were given the right to establish religion in their territories. Martin Luther died at the age of 62, on February 18, 1546, in Eisleben, his hometown. The effects of the theology developed and promoted by Luther on the Augustinian houses in Germany was devastating, as it was in other European countries. During this time, the Augustinian houses in the region had been students of Luther, who had been vicar, and Saxony, the Augustinians retained only three. Religious houses in general suffered. In the region of Bavaria, five religious houses were lost. In less than two decades, the Protestant Reformation spread. At the Augustinian house at Wittenberg there were 15 friars who had embraced the teachings of Luther, among them the prior of the community. That same year, the Herzberg monastery saw all the religious there defecting. Luther had been appointed vicar to two districts in the 1515 Chapter and his supporters were in authority of the houses. In a Chapter held in 1522 at Wittenberg, opposition to Luther was weak, as houses had separated themselves from the observantine congregation, in large part with the help of the civil governing princes.
A good time was had by all. The tone for the evening was set with a beautiful Mass in Saint Vincent Ferrer Church, followed by a fun-filled reception and dinner at 583 PARK AVENUE, a landmark building on Park Avenue at 63rd in New York City. It was a great opportunity to connect and reconnect with friends who had come from so many of our Augustinian ministries, parishes and institutions. Bill Raftery served as emcee, and his personal friendship with Patty and Jay was most apparent. It was fun listening to the testimonials from people like Ed Pinckney, Randy Foye, Mike Nardi, and Neil Augustine, who spoke about the impact the Wrights have had on friends, family, teammates, students, coaches and countless others. It was abundantly clear how the larger community has been inspired by their commitment to service, to a tireless work ethic, and commitment to family values.

ON APRIL 27, 2017, the Augustinians of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova honored Patty and Jay Wright with the Inaugural Saint Augustine Medal in New York City. The Medal was instituted to recognize an individual or individuals who have promoted Augustinian values, served our community and been living examples of veritas, unitas and caritas. Both Patty and Jay have humbly and effectively done so in most extraordinary ways. The Augustinian community has always been grateful for the work that Patty and Jay have done to promote our mission, but this was an opportunity to say a big “thank you” for the impact they have had on so many others. Together they have served as ambassadors of the Augustinian charism and spirit to the world.

The night itself was filled with joy and laughter. Father Michael Di Gregorio, O.S.A., Madonna Sutter, the Medal Dinner Committee, the Advancement staff and volunteers did an outstanding job organizing the event and making sure that a good time was had by all. The tone for the evening was set with a beautiful Mass in Saint Vincent Ferrer Church, followed by a fun-filled reception and dinner at 583 PARK AVENUE, a landmark building on Park Avenue at 63rd in New York City. It was a great opportunity to connect and reconnect with friends who had come from so many of our Augustinian ministries, parishes and institutions. Bill Raftery served as emcee, and his personal friendship with Patty and Jay was most apparent. It was fun listening to the testimonials from people like Ed Pinckney, Randy Foye, Mike Nardi, and Ned Augustine, who spoke about the impact the Wrights have had on friends, family, teammates, students, coaches and countless others. It was abundantly clear how the larger community has been inspired by their commitment to service, to a tireless work ethic, and commitment to family values.

Patty and Jay were most gracious in accepting the Saint Augustine Medal and Jay, in his acceptance speech, was quick to highlight the many friendships and moments he and Patty have shared with the Augustinians. By allowing us to honor them in such a public way, they also enabled us to retell a very compelling story of a handful of Augustinian Friars venturing to the states from Ireland with a faith, hope and vision, which is the same spirit that we Augustinian Friars share today! Jay made a point in his acceptance speech to highlight the work being done by the Augustinian Order and the need for people to stay involved. The Augustinians are all extremely grateful for the awareness of our mission and outreach to God’s people that Patty and Jay have accomplished through this special night and their continued work on behalf of all of God’s people.
Saint Augustine Medal Dinner
APRIL 27, 2017

The Saint Augustine Medal Dinner Committee, Augustinian Friars and former Villanova and University of Rochester men’s basketball players celebrate with inaugural recipients Patty and Jay Wright.

Top: Randy Foye, former Villanova’s men’s basketball player and NBA player, shares the impact that the Wrights had on his life; bottom: Jay Wright expresses his emotion as his former players provide testimonials.

(l-r) Bob DeConcini, Medal Dinner Co-Chair, takes a moment to catch up with former Villanova University head football coach, Andy Talley, and his wife Arlene.

Bill Raftery, renowned basketball analyst, served as the master of ceremonies for the event.

For all photos and videos from the Medal Dinner go to: www.augustinianfund.org/medal-dinner
The Cause Solemnly Begun and Steadily Underway
BY FATHER MICHAEL DI GREGORIO, O.S.A.

Perhaps not a single person among the hundreds who filled Saint Thomas of Villanova Church on Monday evening, April 24, 2017, had ever witnessed a ceremony similar to the one that signaled April 24, 2017, had ever witnessed a ceremony similar to the one that signaled the beginning of the diocesan cause for the beatification and canonization of Augustine, professed priest of the Order of Saint Augustine...So help me God.”
FANA Formation Gathering in San Diego, California

For the third consecutive year, all of the Augustinian students in initial formation from the four North American Provinces, gathered together with their formation directors, vocation directors, and respective priors provincial, for several days of prayer, conversation and relaxation. This year’s gathering was held in the California Province, on the campus of the University of San Diego, and concluded with the simple profession of vows of four novices, the solemn profession of two friars and the declaration of intention of a priest who is discerning his commitment to the Augustinian way of life. Two of the novices who professed simple vows for one year are Jeremy Hiers, O.S.A., and William Gabriel, O.S.A. The Prior Provincial of the Villanova Province, Father Michael Di Gregorio, O.S.A., received the vows of these two brothers and affiliated them formally as members of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova. This annual gathering was conceived as an opportunity to bring together student friars, pre-novices, and novices, who live throughout the year in three different communities and three different states, in order to become better acquainted and to share experiences. The first such gathering was held at Villanova during the Year of Consecrated Life. The second was held in Chicago, thus alternating the host province and offering friars from different areas of the country the opportunity to participate in the ceremony of religious profession.
Ordained to the Priesthood
Aldo Potencio, O.S.A., was ordained to the priesthood for the Augustinian Province of Canada. The ordination took place at Saint Nicholas Church in Chicago, Illinois, on August 27, 2017. Aldo is a native of Peru and was a student at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. He completed his studies at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and is currently studying for the priesthood at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru.

Augustinian Lay Retreat in Venice, Florida
A North American Augustinian Lay Community hosted a retreat for 25 people from July 21-23, 2017 at Our Lady of the Assumption Retreat Center in Venice, Florida. The retreat included workshops, discussions, and spiritual exercises led by Father Gary McCloskey, O.S.A., the Executive Director of FANA. Father Gary delivered the closing Eucharist, which was attended by approximately 40 people. The retreat was an opportunity for participants to deepen their understanding of Augustinian spirituality and to connect with other Augustinian lay people from across the United States.

Augustinian Named a Bishop in Venezuela
On July 29, 2017, Pope Francis appointed Father Heliodoro Torres Bermúdez, O.S.A., of the Vicariate of Venezuela, as the Bishop of the diocese of Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela. Father Torres Bermúdez is currently the rector of Colegio San Agustín in Caracas, Venezuela, and has been serving in that position since 2006. The ordination took place at the Monastery Chapel in Caracas, Venezuela, on the campus of Villanova University, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. During the ordination, Father Torres Bermúdez was introduced by Father Futoshi Matsuo, O.S.A., of the Vicariate in Japan, who offered the Mass of Thanksgiving at the Chapel at Saint Thomas of Villanova Monastery on the campus of Villanova University.

Commissioning Mass for 2017-2018 Augustinian Volunteers
At a 5:00 PM Mass on Sunday, August 27, 2017, the Augustinian Volunteers celebrated their Commissioning Mass for the volunteers of the 2017-2018 Volunteer year at Saint Augustine Church in Philadelphia. Prior Provincial Michael DiGregorio, O.S.A., celebrated the liturgy, which was followed by a meal for Volunteers staff, friars, family and friends of the Volunteers club in Carr Hall, the parish hall. From August 21 to 29, the volunteers had an Orientation, led by Director Joanna Bowen and her staff members Hannah Kunberger and Taylor Gostomski, that took place at Saint Augustine’s, where the Volunteers class became acquainted with each other prior to heading out to their volunteer sites. This year there are 17 volunteers, 6 of them destined for the international site in Peru. Domestic sites include Lawrence, Mass.; Philadelphia, Pa.; and San Diego and Ventura, Calif.

Fathers to be Ordained
Aldo Potencio, O.S.A., was ordained to the priesthood at Saint Nicholas Church in Chicago, Illinois, on August 27, 2017. The ordination was celebrated by Bishop Robert F. Prevost, O.S.A., Bishop of Chicago. Aldo is a native of Peru and was a student at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. He completed his studies at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and is currently studying for the priesthood at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru.
Most of the congress was hosted on the campus of Villanova University, Villanova, Pa., and there were also visits to Malvern Preparatory School, Malvern, Pa., and Saint Augustine Parish in Philadelphia, Pa., on Wednesday morning and afternoon. The morning presentations on Tuesday-Thursday focused on Augustinian spirituality: the Love of Knowledge and the Search for Truth, Augustinian Passion for Teaching and Learning: Compelled to Teach, and Augustinian Passion for Justice and Peace: Love for Others.

Aside from the morning presentations, the congress included networking opportunities, liturgical celebrations, delicious meals, and creative workshops. Each of the workshops provided opportunities for interaction between the presenters and participants and participating centers of education were able to share information about their Augustinian school with other participants. At the conclusion of the congress, many of the participants commented on the valuable opportunity the congress provided to meet so many colleagues in education and to learn from each other how we teach and learn in our Augustinian schools. Congratulations and thank you to all who participated and to all who serve in the ministry of Augustinian Education.

IN PARADISE

The following foes were called home to God. You can read full biographies of these Augustinians, and post your own reflections or favorite memory, online at www.augustinian.org.

Joseph Xavier O’Connor

Born: 5/26/1928  First Profession: 9/10/1947
Ordained: 12/21/1953  Died: 6/19/2017

Joseph Xavier O’Connor was born on May 26, 1928, in Lawrence, Massachusetts, the son of John E. and Elizabeth O’Connor. Baptized on June 4, 1938, at Saint Mary’s Church there, he attended Saint Laurence O’Toole Parish School and Central Catholic High School, Lawrence. He entered the Order on September 9, 1946 and did his novitiate year at Good Counsel in NY, and professed first vows on September 10, 1947. He graduated from Villanova College (1950) and did theological studies at Augustinian College in Washington, D.C., and earned an MA in Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America. He was ordained on December 21, 1953. Father Joe was assigned in 1954 to Archbishop Carroll High School, Washington, D.C. He then volunteered for the mission in Japan, and sailed on September 6, 1958. He served in parishes in Nagasaki and Fukuoka and was novice master for Brother Joseph Akahara, the first native vocation from the mission. While in Japan, he served as a judge in the baptismal process of Father Maximilian Kolbe, a martyr of charity who was executed in a concentration camp during World War II. In 1974, Father Joe returned to the United States and served in the following parishes: Saint Mary Parish, Lawrence and Saint Augustine Parish, Andover, both in Mass.; Resurrection of Our Lord Parish, Dania, Fla.; Immaculate Conception Parish, Houck Falls, N.Y.; Saint Nicholas of Tolentine Parish, Atlantic City, N.J., the last Augustinian pastor there. In 2007, he went to Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Staten Island, N.Y. and served there until 2010, when he was assigned to Saint Thomas of Villanova Monastery, Villanova, Pa. Father Joe O’Connor died on Monday morning, June 19, 2017, at Bryn Mawr Hospital.

Francis Xavier Gallagher


Francis Xavier Gallagher was born on February 19, 1935, in New York, N.Y., to Patrick Gallagher and Mary Charles. Baptized March 17, 1935, in Saint Pius Church, Bronx, N.Y., he attended Saint Nicholas of Tolentine Parish School and Saint Ann’s Academy, Manhattan. He graduated from Marist College, Poughkeepsie, N.Y. (1956). From 1951 to 1953 he was a novice at the Marist Novitiate, Tyngsboro, Mass., where he entered the Marist Brothers. He taught at Mount Saint Michael Academy, New York, N.Y., and then left the Marists, desiring to become a priest in a religious community. He taught at Saint Nicholas of Tolentine High School in the Bronx the following year. Francis entered our Order on September 9, 1959, at Good Counsel Novitiate in N.Y., professing first vows on September 10, 1960. He completed philosophical studies at Villanova (1961) and studied at Augustinian College, Washington, D.C., (1961-1965) and obtained an MA in religious education. He received an MA in English Language from Villanova University (1965). He was ordained at Saint Nicholas of Tolentine Church, the Bronx, on January 30, 1965. Father Frank’s teaching assignments included Austin Preparatory School, Reading, Mass., (1965) and Malvern Preparatory, Malvern, Pa., (1966-1974). He also served in administration at Biscayne College, Miami, Florida (1974-1988). He served at Province parishes in New York, Massachusetts and Florida. He also served Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, Manhattan. He was then assigned to Saint Augustine Friary, Villanova, Pa., and while residing there he was chaplain at Villa Saint Joseph in Flouton. For health reasons, he was then assigned to Saint Thomas Monastery. In the last years of his life, Father Gallagher was a resident of Arden Courts, King of Prussia, Pa., where he died in the early morning of July 7, 2017.
Dear Friends of the Augustinians,

I hope you enjoy the Saint Augustine Medal Dinner photos in this issue of The Augustinian. The Medal Dinner was enormously successful and raised over $600,000 earmarked for Augustinian Vocation and Formation programs.

I’d like to once again thank Patty and Jay Wright, inaugural recipients, co-chairs Bob DeConcini, Paul Tramontano and Father Rob Hagan, O.S.A., the dinner committee and all who participated in this grand initiative.

I am also grateful to Villanova University, especially Father Peter Donohue, O.S.A., President, and Mark Jackson, Athletic Director, for their collaboration. If you’d like to view the Medal Dinner video, program book and other photos, please visit: www.augustinianfund.org/medal-dinner.

It is our desire to nurture our relationships with those who have supported our Augustinian mission and invite others who may wish to connect with us in regions where we serve or have served in the past. We will host a gathering in the Merrimack Valley in Massachusetts in April 2018. The Augustinian presence in the Merrimack Valley dates back to 1818 and remains strong in our two Augustinian-sponsored parishes, Saint Augustine in Andover and Saint Mary of the Assumption in Lawrence and in our educational ministry at Merrimack College. After January 2018, visit www.augustinianfund.org/merrimack-valley for details and to register.

In this issue, you will also read about the lifelong friendship between Rita and Joe Donahue and Father George F. Riley, O.S.A. Mrs. Donahue has made a generous gift to the Province in honor of the 50-plus-year friendship they’ve shared with Father George. This gift will help to support Father George and other friars who live in Saint Thomas Monastery.

I am pleased to announce the launch of the Province’s Grateful Hearts monthly giving program. Why not consider joining Grateful Hearts for a simple way to make an impact on a monthly basis either through direct debit or credit card? It’s quite easy and you don’t have to think twice about your donation because it’s automatic! Visit www.augustinianfund.org/grateful-hearts to join. Won’t you please consider an offering to the Fund in recognition of an Augustinian who has touched your life?

Let your abundance… supply their need.

The Augustinian Fund strengthens the mission of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova. Generous benefactors sustain the Augustinian way of life through support for the care of elderly and infirm friars and the education and training of future Augustinians. The Fund also provides support for Augustinian ministries that serve the poor and marginalized in foreign missions in Japan and Peru, the Augustinian Volunteer program and the Province’s Justice and Peace Initiatives.

Saint Augustine Legacy Society

YOU’RE INVITED

If you have made a gift in your will or trust, or have named the Augustinians the beneficiary of a retirement plan, insurance policy or other asset, you’re invited to become a member of the Saint Augustine Legacy Society—a group of special donors who have shared their intentions for a future gift. While the details of your gift are a private matter, sharing your commitment enables us to thank you and prepare for the Augustinians’ future.

THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING FAITH AND HOPE THAT WILL LIGHT A PATH FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

Contact Madonna Sutter, madonna.sutter@augustinian.org or call (610) 527-3330, ext. 265.

www.augustinianfund.org/donate

For more information, please contact Madonna Sutter, Director of Advancement, 610-527-3330, ext 265 or madonna.sutter@augustinian.org
Celebrate a Profile in Augustinian Leadership!

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED to join the Augustinian Friars for a cocktail reception. Event proceeds will support the Augustinian Formation Program.

John J. Brennan
Chairman Emeritus and Senior Advisor
The Vanguard Group, Inc.

Wednesday, November 8, 2017
6:00 – 8:30 PM
Overbrook Golf Club

Registration deadline is October 25th
For details and to register visit:
www.augustinianfund.org/overbrook

Questions, contact Madonna Sutter, Director of Advancement at (610) 527-3330, ext. 265 or madonna.sutter@augustinian.org