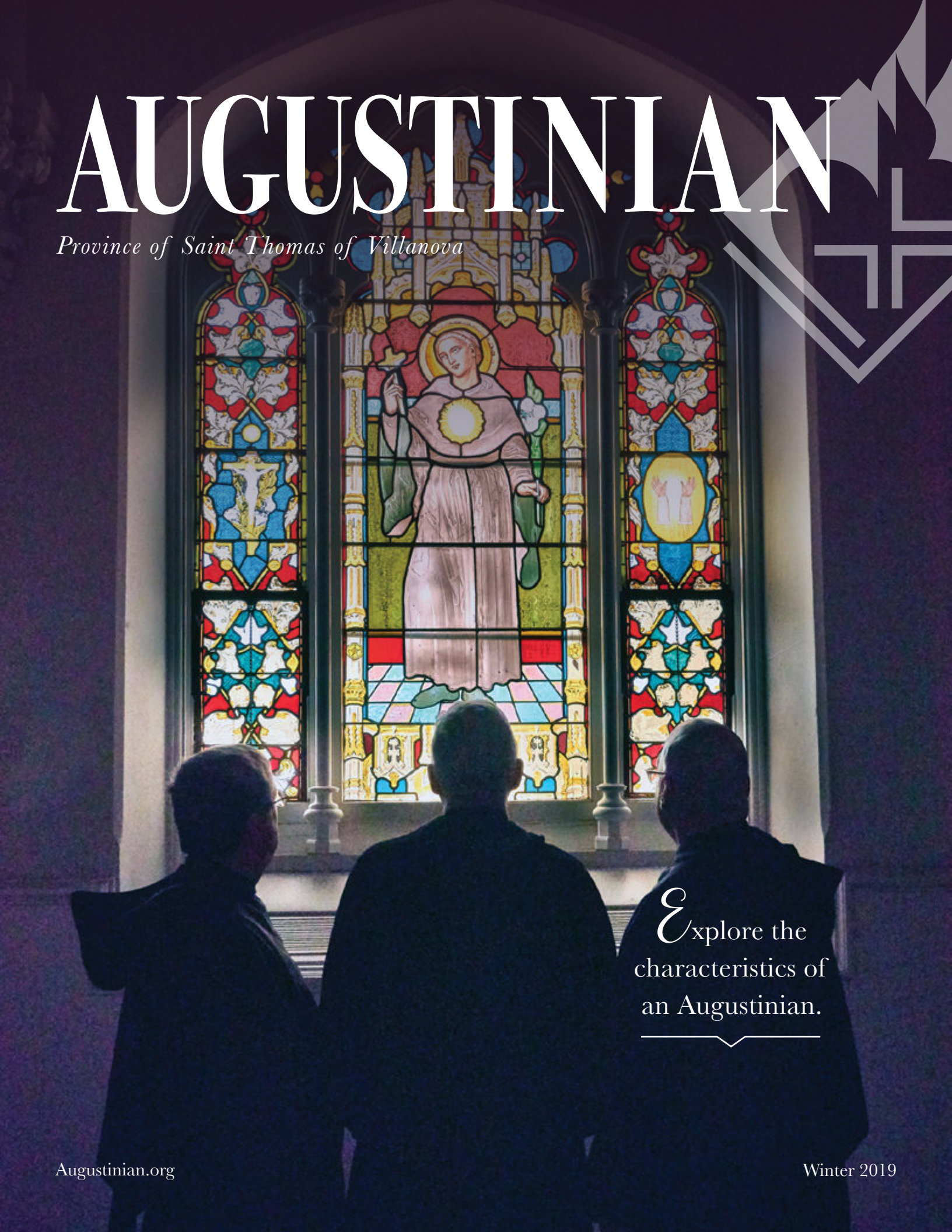


AUGUSTINIAN

Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova

A photograph of three Augustinians in silhouette, viewed from behind, looking at a large, colorful stained glass window. The central panel of the window depicts Saint Thomas of Villanova in a white habit, holding a book and a staff. The side panels feature intricate geometric and floral designs. The scene is set in a church interior with dark walls.

Explore the
characteristics of
an Augustinian.

*Inspired by the religious
insight and teaching of
Saint Augustine*

6



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Cover

Augustinian Friars,
St. Thomas of Villanova
Church, Villanova, PA

photo by Fr. Daniel J. McLaughlin, O.S.A.



2019 Year of Prayer For Healing

In The Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova



The start of a new calendar year is a traditional time for many people to make new resolutions, adopt new goals and identify new opportunities. Surely, the invitation to set in motion a new path is rooted firmly in our Judeo-Christian convictions and practices. It is also thoroughly Augustinian: "Keep on walking, moving forward, trying for the goal," Augustine preaches, "Don't try to stop on the way, or to go back, or to deviate from it" (*Sermon 169, 18*).

It is in this spirit that the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova will observe *A Year of Prayer for Healing* during 2019. We do so conscious of the many instances of brokenness, hurt, offense, and infidelity that mar our Church and society, and that continue to cry out for repair and restoration. We do so aware of the woundedness of many people and of our Christian responsibility to be agents of recovery and promoters of reconciliation. In the large scheme of the Church, we Augustinians and our Province play only a small part, but as disciples seeking to be authentic witnesses of the Gospel, and imbued with the spirit of Saint Augustine, we are called to be mediators of communion and must contribute to healing and reparation, all the more so if we have contributed even in some small way to cause injury and pain.

We invite all of our readers and all the members of our parishes and school communities to join in this Province-wide initiative to be messengers and agents of healing wherever and however such healing is needed. Concretely, we suggest several measures to this end:

- Prayer for healing that is specific, persistent and heartfelt, both personal and communal
- Dialogue with others around the wounds suffered in individuals, in the Church and in our respective communities
- Use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and its place in the healing process

Additionally, the friars will seek opportunities to work with their collaborators in our parishes and schools to promote this observance, and will be encouraged to emphasize forgiveness, healing and reconciliation in their preaching.

This observance of *A Year of Prayer for Healing* began on Sunday January 13, 2019, Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, and will conclude on Sunday November 24, 2019, Solemnity of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. ✠

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Prior Provincial



Dear Friends.

Crossing the threshold of a new year, as we have recently done, does not find us nor our world changed in many significant ways. In some respects, this may be disappointing; in others, it's a great consolation. Change does not often occur spontaneously nor simply; oftentimes it comes only with effort and purpose and time, especially the change we want to see happen within us.

The present issue of our magazine seeks to present some of the unchanging characteristics of Augustinian life, unchanging because they constitute our essential identity or charism. Though the expression of our fundamental character may vary from one period to another, or even from one place to another, there are certain essential 'marks' that remain because they are constitutive of what it means to be Augustinian. We hope that the treatment of some of these, presented through the experience of several of our friars, will help to shed light on our spirituality and way of life. We hope, also, that they match fairly well how you likewise see us.

As 2019 unfolds, we'll continue to be grateful for the ways in which we're privileged to be part of the Church, to exercise the ministries which are entrusted to us, to engage with so many of you who collaborate with us and show us your friendship and support in many different ways. May the months ahead be a blessing! ✠

Sincerely,

Fr. Michael





WISDOM OF THE AUGUSTINIAN TRADITION

“**M**arvelous is your kindness, O most high, for you allow us to be tempted, not that we may succumb, but that we might take refuge from our fear in you, our most safe harbor. You act, Lord, like a good mother, who desires to see and embrace her son, removed far from her, and through some fearful happening strikes fear in him and, stretching

out her arms, she welcomes her son as he flees, joyfully smiles on him and bestows on him loving kisses; and, for fear he may go off elsewhere, she exhorts him to ensure that nothing evil befalls him; she clasps him to herself, consoling him, and finally offers him her milk. O blessed temptation which compels us to take refuge in God's arms.”

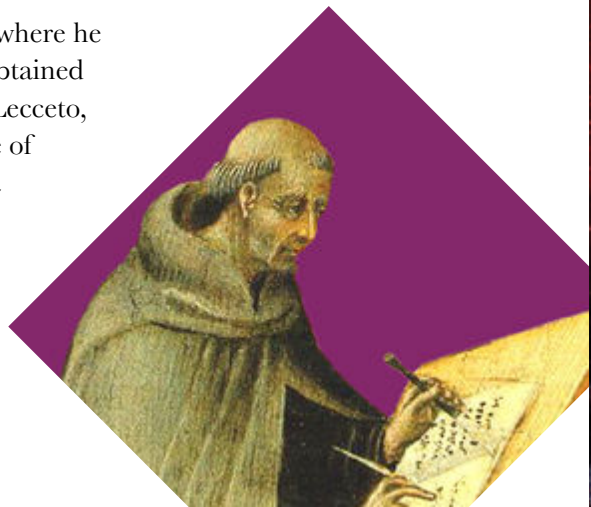
– William Flete, O.S.A., *Spiritual Document*

The interplay of human freedom and divine grace has long been a puzzle for those of us who believe in a God who is both almighty and all-loving. We relish free will and the autonomy it offers, while lamenting the consequences these can have in our persons or on the world around us. We find a thrill in walking the uncertain line between virtue and sin, and even while calling upon divine grace, feel inescapably drawn to its opposite. We might say with Augustine, “I have become a riddle to myself, and that is my infirmity” (*Confessions*, 5, 33.50)!

In this mix, temptation wears a robe of negativity. It pulls us to one side, often the downside. It wants to separate us from the good we want to do, or think we should do, or the not so good we'd rather were not presenting itself to us. Might we see temptation, rather, as opportunity? Is this what Friar William is suggesting to us! An opportunity to recognize a specific and concrete invitation to go where welcome and affirmation and might are offered to us? Can we dare to call temptation ‘blessed,’ recognizing it as the occasion to draw near to God’s enduring grace, a reminder of divine availability and a cue to go to where weakness and vulnerability become strength! If, in fact, it is when we are weak that we are strong, as St. Paul proclaims (2 Cor 12), then the temptations of daily life signal neither abandonment nor isolation, but possibility. They tell us that in our vulnerability we have recourse; they invite us to recognize that we’ve not been left to our own clever feeble devices; they call us to go home again to where the Good has its origin and to where power reaches perfection. O Blessed Temptation!

– Fr. Michael Di Gregorio, O.S.A.

The English Augustinian, William Flete, studied at Cambridge University where he obtained his degree in theology. After ministering in his native land, he obtained permission from the Prior General to transfer in 1359 to the solitude of Lecceto, near Siena, where he remained until his death. Here he came to know Catherine of Siena and served as her spiritual director between 1367 and 1374. William was a zealous promoter of the renewal of religious life in his day and continually asserted the primacy of the contemplative life, which must give way to the active, however, when charity toward one’s neighbor requires it. His work, *Remedies Against Temptations*, was known and used by Julian of Norwich in her own work, *Showing of Love*. ☩



Characteristics of an Augustinian

The *Rule and Constitutions of the Order of St. Augustine* are the two principal documents which define and describe the spirituality and essential characteristics of Augustinian religious life. In the following pages, our friars reflect on several of these characteristics which have shaped and inspired them and countless other friars throughout history.



Community

One Mind and

BY BROTHER ELIZANDRO
CONTRERAS, O.S.A.



*Augustinian Friars in prayer
at the Theologate in Chicago*

Since I first met the Augustinians their way of life has caught my attention, especially the very important aspect of their living “the community experience.”

Although I was born in an Augustinian parish, it was not until I was eighteen that I first visited one of their communities. I was amazed to see a group of men all different – in personality, age, culture, and nationality – but deeply devoted to making real the commandment of our Lord to “love your God with all your heart and soul and mind, and then your neighbor as yourself,”

“Community living requires sensitivity, respect, tolerance, responsibility, humility, openness, trust, a sense of humor, courage, thankfulness, presence, self-giving, and love.”

— Br. Elizandro Contreras, O.S.A.

One Heart



Br. Elizandro Contreras, O.S.A.

trying to live out this belief with a shared desire for God with St. Augustine’s *Rule* as a guide.

It was, perhaps, their brotherhood and their care for each other that attracted me, or their respect and engagement in their ministries, or maybe it was their way of searching for God through the

study of Scripture helping them to have a better understanding of God’s message, or possibly the custom of gathering together for prayer, accompanied by evident generosity that changed my mind about religious life, priesthood, and community living. This experience cured my blindness and changed my mistaken notion of seeing priests and religious as



Community Life According to the Constitutions

Community is the axis around which Augustinian religious life turns: a community of brothers who live harmoniously in their house, united by a single soul and a single heart, seeking God together and open to the service of the Church.

– Constitutions n. 26



and early spring where a major force reminds me that I have to die and let go of my pride and attachments, which are no more than selfishness, control and ego. And when that happens, the cold winter leads me to a fragile state of being trustful of God in order to see that every grace I receive comes from him. Then, I learn that I can grow again with a new humble attitude of love (my spring).

This process of conversion made me capable of understanding and appreciating how important it is to be an authentic Augustinian, being in ongoing interior renewal in order to be an integrated person with a close relationship with Christ that can help me to experience authentically community life. Why? Because community living requires sensitivity, respect, tolerance, responsibility, humility, openness, trust, a sense of humor, courage, thankfulness, presence, self-giving, and love. And all of this comes from us as individuals, not in some mechanical way. It is not something that we can buy online. We can experience all of this only if we are engaged in the struggle of conversion so as to become Christ. Then, I believe, the more integrated we are, the more we can bring to the community and have better and healthier relationships. We also can produce better fruit through our life-style as witnesses of Christ in the Church.

I am very grateful to the Augustinians for giving me the opportunity to be part of this family and for all the support that the Villanova Province is giving me to grow in my journey of conversion, to be at my side and with me at every moment, to be with me in oneness of mind and heart fixed upon God. ✠



Br. Elizandro with fellow Augustinians in formation

raised up on clouds, one step from heaven, and I realized that they were not that far from us lay persons.

I learned the basics of community living from my mother who as a single-mother knew how important it is to have a quality relationship with God, with relatives and neighbors, since everything is possible with their support. I remember that in our neighborhood we treated each other as a big family and we shared many things – spiritual, emotional, and material.

It was not until I joined the Augustinians that I started to walk the path of conversion. On this path, as I am moving forward, I am experiencing many changes in my life. Sometimes I feel that my life is on hold between an autumn/winter





Humility

BY FATHER EDWARD DIXEY, O.S.A.

and the

Search for Truth

Fr. Edward Dixey, O.S.A., takes you on a journey through Scripture offering spiritual insight into the virtue of humility.



Adam and Eve – Conscious of the symbolism of Genesis 1-3, one may profitably reflect on the Garden of Eden as a time and place of happiness with all needs satisfied, intimate daily friendships with God, and an important restriction, “not to eat the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Bad under the penalty of death.” The lying Tempter ensnares the curious Eve with “No! you certainly will not die...God knows your eyes will be opened... and you will be like gods who know...” Eve ate; she gave to Adam who ate; their eyes were opened they came to know. The Tragedy of the FALL began. It is the classic story of the rejection of humbly doing God’s Will (His Way), by doing one’s own will (My Way) of puffed up self-importance.

The Tax Collector – Jesus, in the Parable about the Pharisee and The Tax Collector, gives us a memorable story about a man who humbly comes to God conscious of his sin and with Faith in God’s Mercy; he prays simply and truly for God’s Mercy; and he receives it (Lk 19:9-14).

St. Peter – As the Last Supper was coming to completion, Jesus said to his disciples: “This night all of you will have your faith in me shaken.” A self-confident Peter spoke to



Fr. Edward Dixey , O.S.A., 89 years old, was ordained to the priesthood on June 8, 1957

Paul - St. Paul relates that he was tempted to boast about an experience (possibly mystical) that he had, and he was getting elated (puffed up), when God allowed a temptation that humbled him quickly.

Hand-written article of Fr. Edward Dixey, O.S.A.

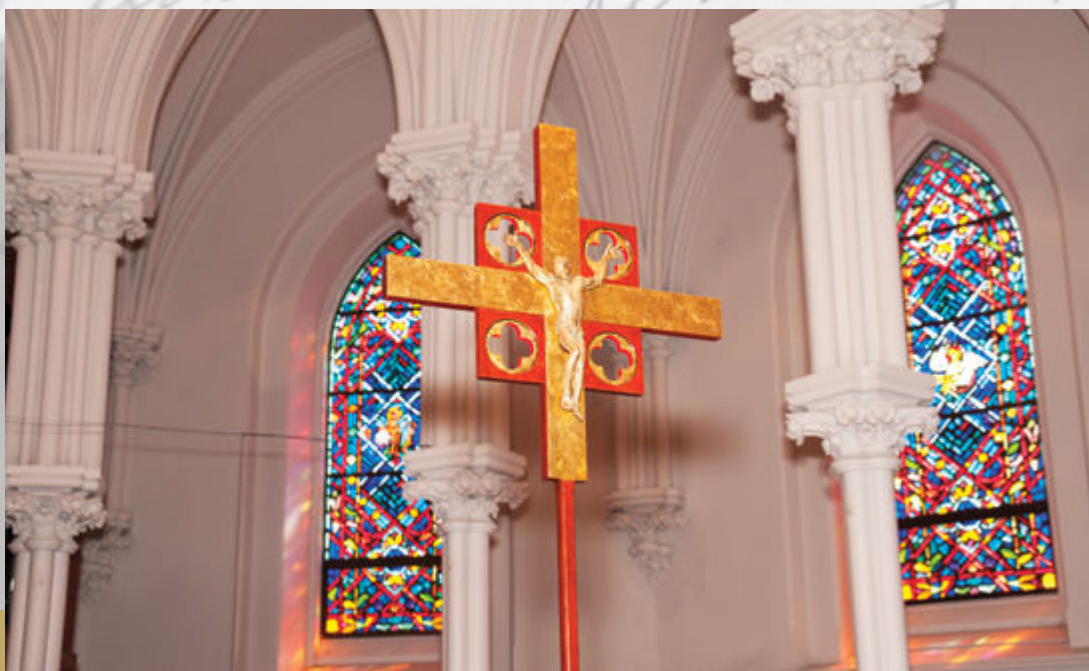
Jesus, in reply: "Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you." Not many hours later in the High Priest's courtyard, Peter for the third time accused of being a disciple of Jesus "began to curse and to swear I do not know the man, and immediately a cock crowed."

Then, Peter remembered what Jesus had said at the Supper: "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times." A humbled Peter went out and began to weep bitterly (Mt 26).

St. Paul – St. Paul relates that he was tempted to boast about an experience (possibly mystical) that he had, and he was getting elated (puffed up), when God allowed a temptation that humbled him quickly. He cried to God for help. Without delivering Paul from his struggle God answered Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in

weakness." Paul's chastened response was that of a humble man: "I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and constraints, for the sake of Christ, for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:7-10).

St. Augustine of Hippo – Convinced of the foundational nature of the Virtue of Humility for one to have a solid Spiritual Life, St. Augustine wrote: "Grasp the truth of God by using the way He provides,



since He sees the weakness of our footsteps. That way consists first of humility, second of humility, and third of humility. Unless humility precede, accompany, and follow up all the good we accomplish, unless we keep our eyes fixed on it, pride will snatch everything right out of our hands" (Letter 118, 22).

Anonymous – The proud person may deal with his setbacks with a complaint, Why me? The humble person trusting in a Loving, Merciful God with a believer's prayer, Why not me?

King David – "A humble contrite heart you will not spurn" (Ps 51:19).

The Blessed Virgin Mary – "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my savior" (Lk 1:46-47). ✠



Humility According to the Constitutions

The following of Christ is the true and genuine meaning of religious life, and therefore constitutes its fundamental norm. However, since the faithful imitation of Christ demands a deep spiritual life, we must especially accompany him along the path of humility, even to the complete emptying of ourselves: This is the way: walk in humility that you may reach eternity.

– Constitutions n. 56

Love the Essence of God

BY FATHER DONALD REILLY, O.S.A.

St. Augustine wrote a *Rule* or Way of Life for his followers in 397 A.D. when he was forty-six years old, thirteen years after his baptism. This brief yet compelling guide to living the common life is the oldest prescription for those seeking to replicate that first community of faith chronicled in the Acts of the Apostles. The preface of this model of living captures the spirit of that earnest and vibrant cohort of believers: "Before all else, beloved, love God and then your neighbor, for these are the chief commandments given to us". Clearly stating the priority for his circle of seekers, Augustine is extending Matthew's (22:36-40) and Mark's (12:28-34) foundational directive to those who aspire to live together in unity of mind and heart intent upon God.



Wisely, Augustine the teacher amplifies and defines his thinking. He rhetorically asks: What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like. Love is emphatically a verb for Augustine. He takes us to another level on the topic of love by suggesting that "Beauty grows in you to the extent that love grows" because charity itself is the soul's beauty.

I have had the wonderful experience of a wide variety of ministries these past forty-four years.



Fr. Donald Reilly, O.S.A., and other priests present impose hands on the newly ordained as a sign of priestly communion

While secondary education was not what I envisioned at this stage of my life, it is a privilege to be with young

“It is difficult to love another if the journey to the heart, the path to self-knowledge, has not recognized the one with whom we travel, namely, the God who knows us, reveals himself to us and loves us.”

— Fr. Donald Reilly, O.S.A.

people and a rewarding apostolate. Many people pursue permanence of

place and security of position in their lives. A friar’s life, however, is open to responding to needs larger than his own, frequently leading to work he trusts and believes serves a larger Plan. In this process, love changes and love changes everything. The thought has occurred to me more than once that with each new

assignment, I have evolved in how I “do” ministry, how I love. There

is comfort and a certain kind of joy knowing that personal limitations, reticence, and hesitations with the demands of ministry are actually invitations to grow in love.

While our most important spiritual duty in this life is to love others, we must love ourselves first. Loving self is not a self-centered endeavor nor is it egotistical. Loving oneself, as Augustine suggests, is an encounter with the Inner Teacher, the voice and presence of God heard and experienced in the deepest recesses of our heart. He tells us: Christ lives in the heart of each one of us, and he is our best teacher. Loving oneself is a relationship with that which is holy

Head of School at Malvern Prep, Fr. Donald Reilly, O.S.A., taking part in his ministry



and wholesome at our core.

It is difficult to love another if the journey to the heart, the path to self-knowledge, has not recognized the one with whom we travel, namely, the God who knows us, reveals himself to us and loves us.

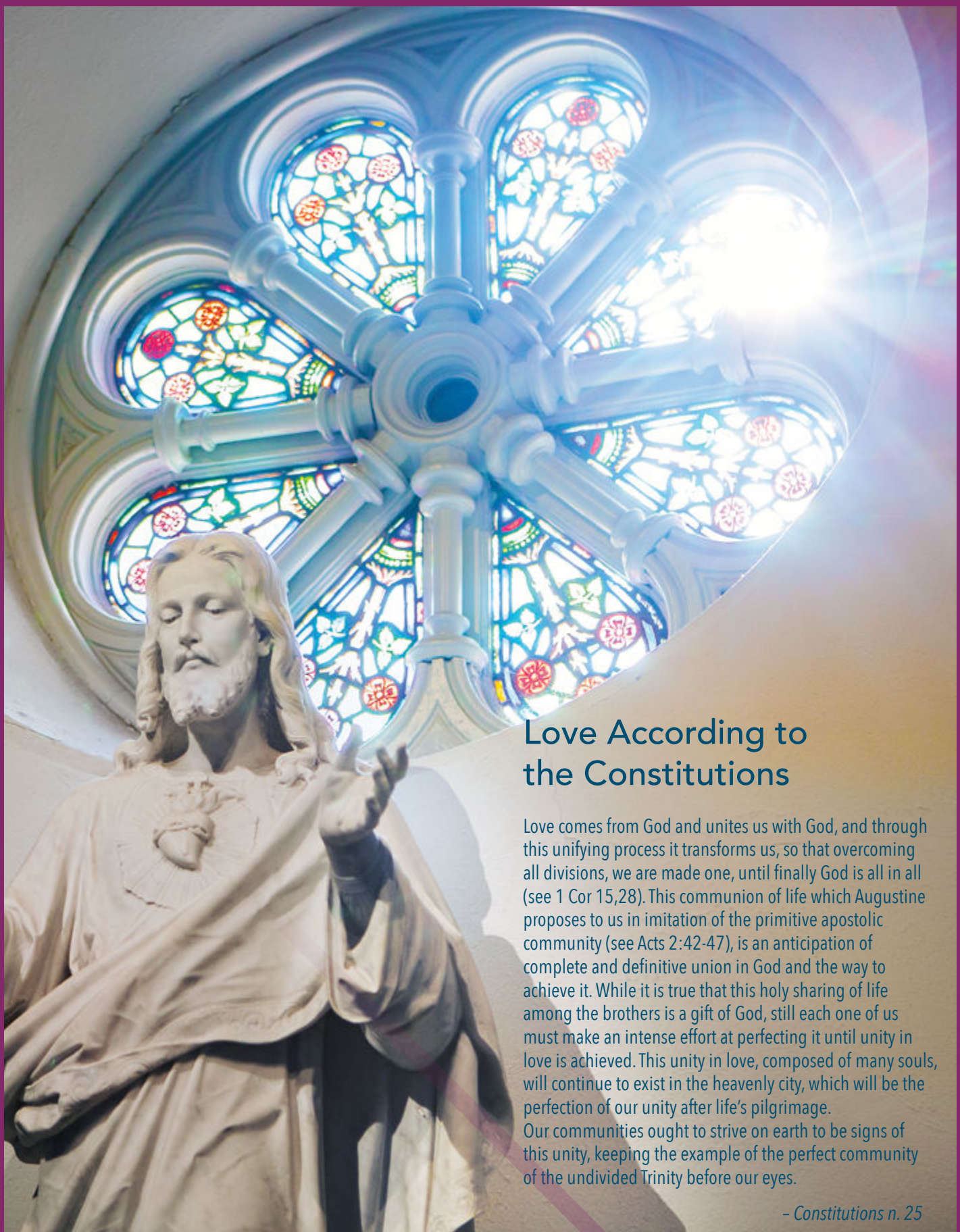
The best description I can give of love in my life at Malvern, in the midst of six hundred and fifty students from grades six to twelve, a dedicated Faculty and Staff, is to invest in the relationships as if I were going to experience the benefits from that investment. But, a generative love does not look for a return. It is one that moves toward making connections

— the drive toward the unity of the separated. This kind of love builds and reveals what we share in common creating the condition for the possibility of friendships so important to Augustine. I have come to understand, as Benignus O'Rourke, O.S.A. says: We do not try to make ourselves acceptable to God or to others by doing good things. Slowly we become aware of our union with Love and begin to live out of that love. So our goal in life changes. Our goal is to be love. How we live now is inspired by knowing that love is our very essence. All we do will be good if we are centered on the awareness of our union with the God who is Love. ✚

**To learn more about
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Love According to the Constitutions

Love comes from God and unites us with God, and through this unifying process it transforms us, so that overcoming all divisions, we are made one, until finally God is all in all (see 1 Cor 15,28). This communion of life which Augustine proposes to us in imitation of the primitive apostolic community (see Acts 2:42-47), is an anticipation of complete and definitive union in God and the way to achieve it. While it is true that this holy sharing of life among the brothers is a gift of God, still each one of us must make an intense effort at perfecting it until unity in love is achieved. This unity in love, composed of many souls, will continue to exist in the heavenly city, which will be the perfection of our unity after life's pilgrimage. Our communities ought to strive on earth to be signs of this unity, keeping the example of the perfect community of the undivided Trinity before our eyes.

– *Constitutions n. 25*

“It is only when we come to know our true self that we begin to experience the life that God wants for us.”

— Br. Bill Harkin, O.S.A.



Interiority and the Expression of our Life

BY BROTHER BILL HARKIN, O.S.A.

When I entered the Augustinian Order sixty years ago, I thought I had a solid plan of how the rest of my life would go. Like Augustine, I soon found out what my gifts and shortcomings were. It is only when we come to know our true self that we begin to experience the life that God wants for us. Often, it is the wider and close community that helps us to discover who we really are. Despite what we would hope for, it is an ongoing experience.



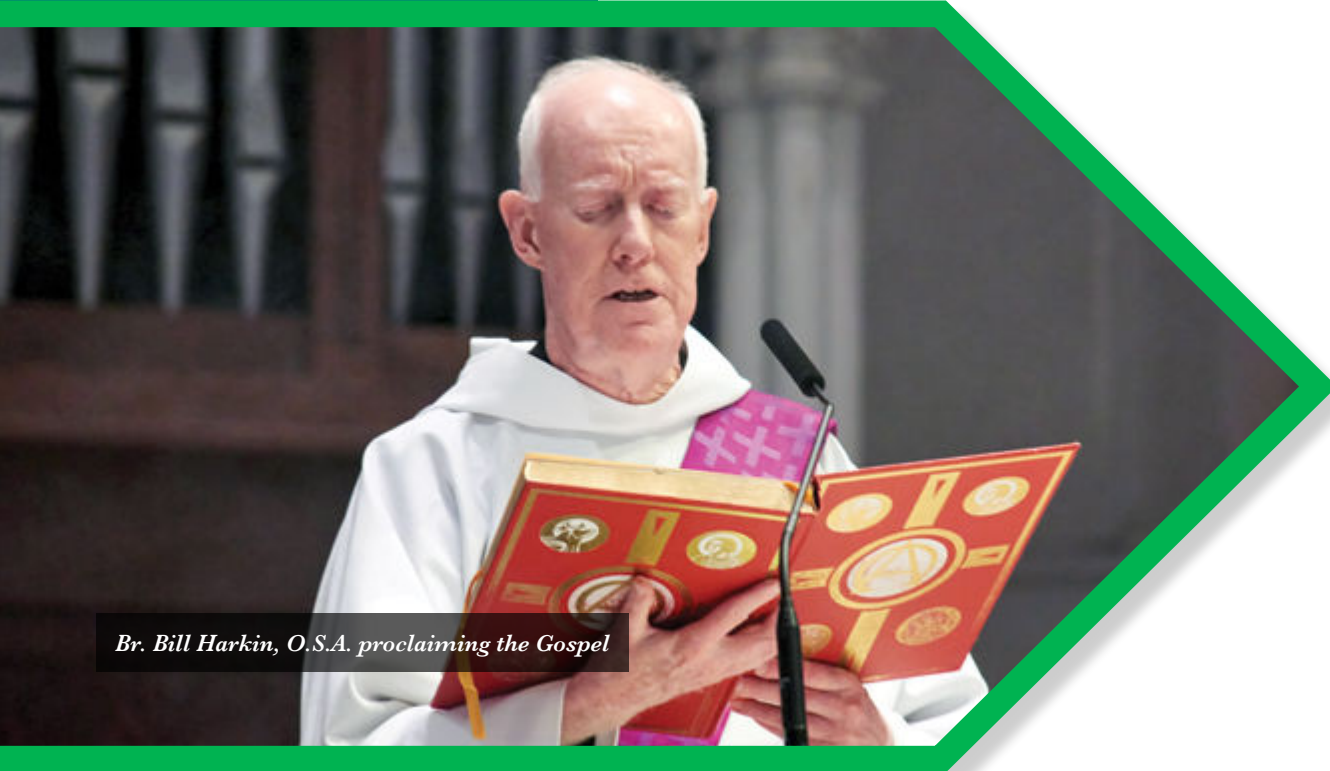
Lord let me know myself,
and let me know you
(*Soliloquies 2,1,1*).

At times, riding the bus or train, and especially around campus at Villanova University, everyone is texting or reading emails – sometimes even in church. There is very little interaction. The challenge is how do we become immersed in our time with God, and fulfill our needs for communication with others? This is the society we live in, and, like Augustine, we must adapt to the changes in our lives and the lives of those to whom we are called to be present.

“Be of one mind and one heart, intent upon God”
(Augustine’s *Rule* 1, 3).



Often as Catholics, we strive to complete tasks. It is easier to supervise the building of a church or school, or to present a college or high school course, than to assist someone who is having a spiritual crisis. One has a solution, the other may not. Ministry requires quantity, where community requires quality. Our Augustinian way



Br. Bill Harkin, O.S.A. proclaiming the Gospel

Interiority According to the Constitutions

Prayer, often described by Augustine as a “desire” or “the crying out of the heart,” is the consistent expression of our life of faith, hope, and charity. As a consequence, we should preserve an harmonious balance between prayer and the whole of life. Prayer is manifested in life and life becomes prayer: Praise God with your whole self, that is, not only with your tongue and voice but with your conscience, with your life and your works.

– *Constitutions n. 25*

of life gives us the opportunity to search for God in the company and support of our brothers and sisters. Our ministry to the faithful should include, not just giving spiritual help, but walking with them.

“I searched for you outside myself, while all along you were within me” (Augustine’s *Confessions* 7, 10, 18).

Baptism is our ongoing dialogue with God that lasts our whole life, striving to be like Jesus who is “Priest, Prophet and King” (*Rite of Baptism* #98).

We are called to be a praying person, one who passes on our experience of God to those we come in contact with, and who shares our giftedness with the wider community.

“The Christian Community welcomes you with great joy, in its name I claim you for Christ our Savior” (*Rite of Baptism* 111).

The celebration of the Eucharist is our ultimate and intimate experience of God in our lives. Celebrating Morning Prayer with the community is a wonderful preparation for Eucharist, celebrating Evening Prayer is an opportunity for thanksgiving for the Eucharist. This is life giving.

*“Lord let me know myself,
and let me know you.”*

— *Soliloquies 2,1,1*

“Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you” (Jn 6: 51-58).

Those of us who have had cataract surgery, are amazed afterwards by the bright colors and clear vision. Perhaps, our souls also get cataracts that cloud our vision of God because of anger, jealousy, fear, resentment, unwillingness to forgive, striving for possessions and loss of faith.

“You have made us for yourself o Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you” (Augustine’s *Confessions* 1, 1, 2).








Restlessness

and the Value of Struggle

BY FATHER JAMES MCBURNEY, O.S.A.

In addition to his work as Secretary of the Province, Fr. James McBurney, O.S.A. occasionally leads retreats. He has done both lay men's and women's retreats at Malvern Retreat House and St. Raphaela Retreat Center as well as preached retreats for Sisters from different religious communities in the Philadelphia area and beyond. Here he writes about the Augustinian characteristic of Restlessness.



How many of us think of restlessness as a gift? Is that possible? One of the first things most of us probably learned in our religious education was the question: Why did God make me? You know the answer: God made me to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him in this world and to be happy with God forever in the next. That teaching reminds us for whom we have been created and why we exist. It reminds us of the connection between the present and the future; between life, death and eternal life.



Fr. James McBurney, O.S.A., speaking to the Sisters of the Holy Child at their annual Advent retreat this past December



It also offers a point of orientation to reflect on restlessness. There is a longing in every human heart to know and be known by God. Augustine captured this reality so well in the beginning of his *Confessions* (Book 1,1) “You have made us for yourself and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”

I like to think that restlessness reveals itself in various ways. I recognize restlessness when I realize I am being called to ongoing conversion of mind and heart, when I am aware of my incompleteness and yearn “for more,” when I recognize not so much that I have found God, but that God has found me. I recognize restlessness when I feel an inner nudge moving me beyond complacency to something new and unknown. Augustine speaks about the temptation to complacency in *Sermon 169*: “Do not be content with what you are if you want to become what you are not yet. For where you have grown pleased with yourself, there you will remain. You must always look for more, walk onward, make progress.”

Another way to speak about restlessness is by looking at those moments in our lives of discovering we are

“There will always be restlessness, discomfort and struggle in becoming the persons we are called to be in Christ.”

— Fr. James McBurney, O.S.A.

dissatisfied with ourselves. In various places in the *Confessions*, Augustine writes of his dissatisfaction with himself.

In the *Confessions*, Book 8, 10, 11 Augustine describes his desire to imitate Christ but how he is hindered by lustful thoughts. He says: “a new will began to emerge in me that was not yet capable of surmounting that earlier will. And so the two wills fought it out – the old and the new, the one carnal, the other spiritual – and in their struggle tore my soul apart.” And further on: “The force of habit that fought against me had grown fiercer by my own doing, because I had come willingly to this point where I now wished not to be.” Naming and claiming moments of awareness of dissatisfaction with oneself and entrusting them to God’s grace and care, can pave the way for moving us forward in the spiritual journey.


Finally, let me offer a very practical application of restlessness. In the friary where I live, we recently renovated our kitchen. It received what one would call an “extreme makeover.” We were displaced from our kitchen for almost ten weeks. We used paper plates and cups for eating and drinking and needed to wash used silverware in a second floor sink. Our refrigerator was moved into the dining room. The experience of being displaced and dislocated was not pleasant, but the joy of one day returning to the renovated kitchen made the wait and the dislocation worthwhile. Embracing the restlessness of the spiritual journey

“Return to your heart
and hold fast to him who made you.
Stand with Him
and you will stand firm,
Rest in Him
and you will find peace.”

– *Confessions*, Book 4, 12, 18

involves some “dislocation,” so we may find our true location and grow in our relationship with Christ. There will always be restlessness, discomfort and struggle in becoming the persons we are called to be in Christ. May we always strive to find value in the struggle. ✚





Restlessness According to the Constitutions

We tend towards God continually and insatiably, consciously and unconsciously, in order to enjoy the infinite good that fulfills our desire for happiness, because God has made us for himself and our hearts are restless until they rest in him. For that reason, our common dedication is to seek without limits Him who should be loved without limits. But we cannot seek God together, except in Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh for us. He is for us the way, the truth and the life, such that starting from the visible flesh we arrive at the invisible God.

– *Constitutions n. 22*

Friendship and the Spirit of Charity

BY BISHOP LOUIS A. DESIMONE

*“Spirit of
God enlightens me
so that by your light
I may inspire others.”*



Bishop Louis A. DeSimone, retired Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia, a close friend and affiliate of the Order of St. Augustine, was honored at the 2018 St. Augustine Medal Dinner on October 4, 2018. Over 350 guests attended the celebration and, although the Bishop was too ill to attend, he was clearly present in the minds and hearts of those gathered in his honor. Bishop DeSimone passed onto the Lord, Friday, October 5, 2018 at St. Thomas Monastery in Villanova, PA. Dr. Pamela W. Abraham accepted the St. Augustine Medal on Bishop DeSimone's behalf and read aloud his prepared speech:

When you get very old, there is a very fine line between reality and fantasy. As I was listening to the many eulogies on my behalf, I thought maybe I had died. And I fantasized that my guardian angel carried my soul to the gates of heaven, there, the soul was to be examined by St. Peter: to see to whom the soul belonged and what that person did to merit heaven. My guardian angel said that the soul belonged to a man who had an Augustinian heart, a man very well known on the Villanova campus and a man everyone wanted to greet. He was rather good looking, a fine head of hair and shiny teeth with a great personality. He was liked by everyone. So suddenly, St. Peter cries out

Saint Augustine Medal Dinner October 4, 2018



Dr. Pamela Abraham, who accepted the St. Augustine Medal on behalf of Bishop Louis DeSimone, and Fr. Michael Di Gregorio, O.S.A., Prior Provincial

“Ok I got it; I know who it is.” And so he calls to the angels at the gates “Open the gates and let him in, it is Coach Jay Wright.”

I take this opportunity to thank Coach Jay, his wife Patty and the Wright family for consenting to establish this means of support for the retired and ill Augustinian Friars.

In fact my gratitude extends to everyone here this evening, and to someone who is not here namely our good Archbishop Charles Chaput, who is in Rome for a synod. But he is well represented by Philadelphia Bishops, Archbishop James Green, Bishop Timothy Senior and Bishop John

McItyre. I also thank our Honorary Co-Chairs, Bishop Robert McGinnis, Monsignor Donald Leighton and our working Co-Chairs Fr. Jack Deegan and John and Joan Mullen, who canvassed the entire region with a loaded gun. However, they are honorable persons. I think you may know that Joan is the sister of someone very special to this Augustinian Province, namely Fr. Bill Atkinson, whose cause for sainthood has reached the proper Vatican approbation.



(l-r) Director of Advancement Madonna Sutter, John and Joan Mullen, Prior Provincial Fr. Michael DiGregorio, O.S.A., Jim and Diane Murray and Fr. Jack Deegan, O.S.A.

Archbishop had come from France to begin a new diocese in an impoverished region. It was difficult for him to raise funds. One day, he got a surprise visit from the town Madam. She offered the Archbishop a good sum of money with the proviso that when she died she would be buried under the floor of the Cathedral. The Archbishop hesitated but eventually agreed to the proposition. The Cathedral was finally built and eventually the Madam died. The Archdiocese kept its promise and the Madam was buried under the floor of the Cathedral. From that day until now she has never missed a Sunday Mass. Dear friends, if I should get to heaven before you, be sure that I will put in a good word praising your support and your love of our Augustinian Friars. ✚

Thank you, Jim and Diane Murray, for the very necessary spiritual support, giving out Rosaries to elicit the Blessed Virgin Mary's support of the St. Augustine Medal Dinner Committee. Finally, thank you to Prior Provincial Michael DiGregorio and his invaluable Director of Advancement, Madonna Sutter. A special thanks to all who helped us and served us at the Philadelphia Country Club.

As I look out at so many beautiful faces, I am reminded that one of the figures of heaven is the banquet table where God the Father sits at the head and He calls us to our seats one by one. Our good Heavenly Father sometimes goes to extremes to get us home.

There is a story told about Archbishop Lamy who built the Cathedral of Santa Fe beginning in 1869. The good

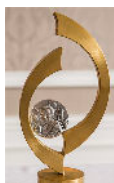


Augustinian Friars present at the 2018 St. Augustine Medal Dinner

Master of Ceremonies, Pat Ciarrocchi discusses Bishop DeSimone's life and connection to the Province



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Event Photos**



Friendship According to the Constitutions

Community is the fruit of charity and is expressed in friendship, which brings forth and nourishes loyalty, trust, sincerity and mutual understanding. Charity unites us in Christ through the Holy Spirit, helping us to recognize the signs of God's love in the events and

circumstances of life. Thus, united in charity, we share mutually the gifts given to us and to others. Whatever is worthwhile is held in esteem by the Augustinian community and is offered to Christ, from whom all good things proceed and in whom all things are re-established.

– *Constitutions n. 29*



Dr. Pamela Abraham (far right) with dear friends of Bishop DeSimone

In Paradisum



Father Michael Scuderi , O.S.A.

October 6, 1966 - September 27, 2018

Fr. Michael Scuderi was born on October 6, 1966, in Darby, PA, was baptized at Saint Charles Borromeo Church, Drexel Hill, and attended Evans Elementary School, Yeadon, PA., Yeadon Junior High School and Haverford High School. He earned a degree in Commerce and Finance from Villanova University in 1989 and held several different jobs before entering the pre-novitiate program of the Province at Augustinian College, Washington, DC. He was received into the Order in 2002, and made his novitiate in Racine, Wisconsin. He professed simple vows on August 10, 2003 at St. Thomas of Villanova Church, Villanova, PA.

Following profession, he continued theological studies in Washington, DC, professed solemn vows

in 2007, and completed his MDiv degree at Chicago Theological Union. He was ordained to the priesthood on October 24, 2009, at St. Rita of Cascia Shrine, Philadelphia, by Bishop Louis DeSimone, at the time Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia.

Fr. Scuderi was assigned in April of 2009 as parochial vicar at Saint Rita of Cascia Parish and Shrine and was appointed treasurer of the local community. Due to health concerns, he was transferred to St. Thomas of Villanova Monastery, Villanova, PA on August 1, 2015. While there, he continued his priestly ministry with the Handicapped Encounter Christ Group (HEC), assisting in vocational ministry and celebrating Mass at the Holy Child Convent for retired and infirm Sisters of the Holy Child.

For almost the entirety of his life, Fr. Michael suffered from rheumatoid arthritis and was in constant pain. Possessed of a strong will, much patience and a strong religious attitude, he nonetheless strove to live and to minister with a positive spirit and good humor and in this way was a source of encouragement to many others.

Following innumerable hospitalizations, procedures and operations, Fr. Michael passed over to the Lord in the early hours of September 27, 2018 at Bryn Mawr Hospital, surrounded by his parents and siblings. He was 51 years old and had been a professed religious for fifteen years and a priest for eight. He is survived by his parents, a brother and a sister and many nieces and nephews.

Fr. Michael's Funeral Mass was celebrated on Monday evening, October 1, 2018 in St. Thomas of Villanova Church. Burial took place the following morning in the Augustinian Plot of Calvary Cemetery, West Conshohocken. ✠

Bishop Louis Anthony DeSimone

February 21, 1922 - October 5, 2018

Louis Anthony DeSimone was born in Philadelphia on February 21, 1922, the eldest of three brothers, all of whom dedicated their lives to the service of the Church. Raised in Bridgeport, PA. where he received his early education, he subsequently entered Villanova College. With the outbreak of the war, with one semester remaining to complete his degree, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, and achieved the rank of sergeant.

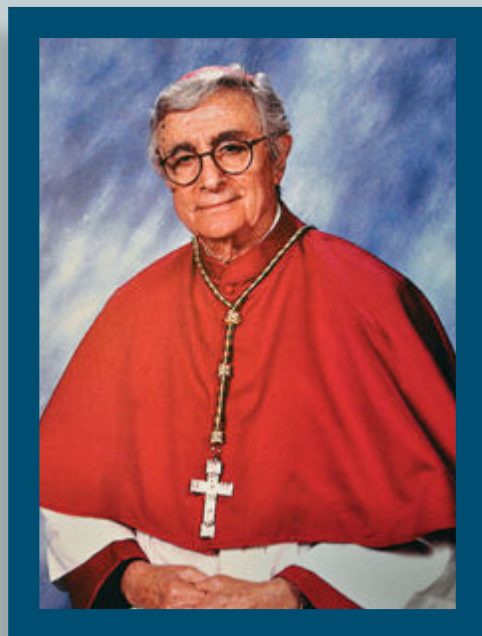
During the war, Sergeant DeSimone was received in audience by Pope Pius XII together with a group of U.S. soldiers. It was then that he mentioned to the Holy Father his thoughts about becoming a priest. "I will pray for you," the pope said, and at his discharge from the service, he entered St. Charles Borromeo Seminary as a candidate for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. While there he completed his Villanova College degree.

On May 10, 1952 Fr. DeSimone was ordained by Archbishop John F. O'Hara. His brother, Fr. Russell DeSimone, O.S.A. had been ordained six months earlier. Their younger brother, Salvatore, would later join the Diocese of Camden. Father Louis was assigned to teach at St. Thomas More High School, Philadelphia, and later served as assistant pastor at St. Donato Parish in Philadelphia and at SS. Cosmas and Damian Parish in Conshohocken, PA. In 1961 he was appointed to the Executive Committee of the Catholic Charities Appeal of the Archdiocese, and in 1968 was named pastor of SS. Cosmas and Damian Parish. In 1971, Cardinal Krol appointed him Archdiocesan Director of Catholic Relief Services.

In 1975, Fr. DeSimone was appointed chairman of the Heritage Group Committee for the 41st International Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia of August 1976. That same year, he was named honorary prelate with

the title of Monsignor. Cardinal Krol chose him to be coordinator of the Italian Earthquake Relief Fund for Friuli, which combined the efforts of the Archdiocese, the City of Philadelphia and the Order of the Sons of Italy in America.

In recognition of his work, the Italian Government awarded him the "Commendatore al Merito della Repubblica Italiana."



Monsignor DeSimone was appointed pastor of St. Monica Church, Philadelphia in November 1976. Three years later, he was appointed a Diocesan Consultor and a member of the Council of Managers of the Archdiocesan Office for Development. He served for several years as a member of the Board of Directors of Pennsylvania Hospital and of Methodist Hospital. He was also a Vice-President of the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

In June 1981 Monsignor DeSimone was named auxiliary bishop of Philadelphia and was ordained to the episcopacy the following August. He was named Vicar General of the Archdiocese, and in 1982 became chairman of the Catholic Charities Appeal. Since his retirement in 1995, Bishop DeSimone has continued to be a visible presence throughout the Archdiocese, still actively engaged in ministry for over 65 years. ✠

Augustinian Connections

Augustinian Sisters Beatified

December 8, 2018, Pope Francis beatified two Augustinian Missionary Sisters martyred in Algeria in 1994. Sisters Caridad Álvarez Martín and Esther Paniagua Alonso were proclaimed blessed together with 18 other religious who gave their lives in recent years in that country. The two sisters freely decided to remain in Algeria in the face of extreme violence, “out of fidelity to the Gospel and love for the Algerian people who had welcomed them,” according to the then provincial of the Augustinian Sisters. “We are in the hands of God,” they declared. Their martyrdom occurred on the 23rd of October, 1994 as they were returning home after the celebration of Mass.



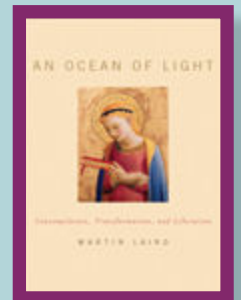
Hearts on Fire by Fr. Michael Di Gregorio, O.S.A.

HEARTS ON FIRE is a collection of short biographical sketches of saintly men and women venerated by the Augustinians. The entries follow the general calendar of the Order in 307 pages and recount the lives of 94 Saints, Blesseds and Servants of God who practiced Augustinian Spirituality in the pursuit of holiness. This volume is a valuable companion for those who celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours according to the Augustinian calendar. The best sources available have been used to present profiles which are historically accurate, clear and up-to-date. \$15 - **To Order:** go to the bottom of our home page at Augustinian.org or email: communications@augustinian.org

Ocean of Light: Contemplation, Transformation, and Liberation by Fr. Martin Laird, O.S.A.

AN OCEAN OF LIGHT speaks both to those just entering the contemplative path and to those with a maturing practice of contemplation. Gradually, the practice of contemplation lifts the soul, freeing it from the blockages

that introduce confusion into our identity and thus confusion about the mystery we call God. *Available at amazon.com*



New Augustinian Friends Laity Group

Augustinian Friends is an appropriate name for Lay groups since Augustine had a great appreciation for friends and community.

“There were other joys to be found in their company (his friends) which still more powerfully captivated my mind—the charms of talking and laughing together and kindly giving way to each other’s wishes, reading elegantly written books together, sharing jokes and delighting to honor one another, disagreeing occasionally, but without rancor, and lending piquancy by

that rear disagreement to our much more frequent accord. We would teach and learn from each other, sadly missing any who were absent and blithely welcoming them when they returned. Signs of friendship sprang from the heart of friends who loved and knew their love returned, signs to be read I smiles, words, glances and a thousand gracious gestures. Se were sparks kindled and our minds were fused inseparably, out of many becoming one” (*Confessions*, 4, 13).

At the parish of St. Mary of the Assumption in Lawrence MA. a new group of Lay Augustinians will be forming in the near future. To begin or join a group: Contact Fr. John Deary, O.S.A., Director of Augustinian Secular Groups at jfdosa@yahoo.com. ✠



THE Augustinian Fund

Let your *abundance*, supply their *need*.

The Augustinian Fund was established in 2006 to build a reliable source of annual revenue to help the Province meet its' financial responsibilities and support its critical needs. Years ago, the friars' earned salaries were sufficient to cover all of the friars' expenses. However, today, with fewer friars in active ministry and salaried the friars must rely on the generosity of friends and benefactors to help them sustain the Augustinian way of life and the ministries they perform.

SUSTAINS THE AUGUSTINIAN WAY OF LIFE



VOCATION AND FORMATION PROGRAMS enable us to invite, educate and provide for friars and candidates to the Order of Saint Augustine.



THE CARE OF ELDERLY AND INFIRM FRIARS helps us to provide health care and support to infirm and retired friars within our Augustinian communities.

SUPPORTS THE POOR AND MARGINALIZED



THE AUGUSTINIAN VOLUNTEERS provide community life experiences and service opportunities to college graduates and help to the poor.



THE FOREIGN MISSIONS make possible our support of friars and the people they serve in Province mission areas in Japan and Peru.



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For more information or questions, please contact Madonna Sutter, Director of Advancement,
(610) 527-3330, ext. 265 or madonna.sutter@augustinian.org

the
Augustinians

Province of St. Thomas of Villanova

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Join us

**TO RECONNECT WITH AUGUSTINIANS WHO HAVE SERVED
IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA AND STATEN ISLAND**

All Are Welcome



Naples, Florida

A Celebration of Augustinian Charism in Southwest Florida

Thursday, February 28, 2019

4:30 PM Celebration of Mass, St. Agnes Catholic Church

6:00 - 8:00 PM Cocktail Reception, The Vineyards Country Club

To register online, visit: augustinianfund.org/naples-florida



Staten Island, New York

Celebrating the Augustinian Legacy on Staten Island

Thursday, April 25, 2019

5:00 PM Celebration of Mass, Our Lady of Good Counsel

6:00 - 8:00 PM Cocktail Reception, The Staaten

For details and to register after March 1, 2019

visit: augustinianfund.org/staten-island

For more information or questions,

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

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