

AUGUSTINIAN

Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova





Prior Provincial

Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A.

I have had the occasion to reflect a great deal on my life, on the Order, and the good people throughout the Augustinian Community who have made a positive impact in the world through living lives of service. As I conduct the initial stages of a Provincewide visitation, my reflection keeps leading me back to the same place. Gratitude! I am grateful for my vocation to the Augustinian Order and to the many friars who have gone ahead of us. I am grateful for the current friars we have, serving in communities and ministries all around the world, in various ways. I am grateful to all our Augustinian friends who partner with us every day and help to share the Good News in a world that so desperately needs to hear and see it!

In this issue of the Augustinian, you will hear reflections from those who have helped carry on this Augustinian legacy and tradition. May you be inspired by the thousands who joined us at The National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia to pray and work for peace and reconciliation in our world.

You will read about the amazing history of the Augustinian Volunteer Program and the people who made this service opportunity come alive, and be reminded of what incredible things can be accomplished when we believe and work together. I am personally grateful to the late Fr. Ray Jackson, O.S.A. and Fr. Joe Mostardi, O.S.A., all the former directors, leaders, and volunteers, and in particular Hannah Kunberger and Maggie Morrin, for their tireless dedication as the program comes to a close. As we move forward, we look for creative ways to continue to reach the poor and marginalized.

You will also read about Servant of God Fr. Bill Atkinson, O.S.A., and the lives of family, students, co-workers, caretakers, and others who were forever changed because of his patient endurance, resilience, and faith. In this issue, we celebrate the lives of Dr. James Hickey and Fr. Art Johnson, O.S.A., who have helped to solidify our Augustinian legacy in the Merrimack Valley and Austin Prep through leadership and teaching. You will meet Japanese friar Br. Atsushi, as he reflects with gratitude on what drew him to the Order of St. Augustine. Please join me in congratulating him on recently taking his Solemn Vows in Tokyo as we continue to pray for more vocations!

These are challenging times in our world, but they also offer exciting opportunities for the Province and all friends in Augustine. Together we can ensure that the Augustinian charism of Truth, Unity and Love will continue to touch countless lives. May you always know the surprising ways in which God has been and is present in YOUR life, and in gratitude for our many gifts, help us share them with the world!

Peace always,

Fr. Rob

Fr. Rob

📺 Watch Fr. Hagan's Installation

Dear Friends,

One of St. Augustine's many core values is the gift of reflection. Augustine often reflected on his past, his present, his choices and the people in his life. The fruit of this reflection was gratitude and the confirmation that God and God's grace were with him and were shaping his life for the better. The summer months with its warm sun and long days, provide us the opportunity to escape from our regular routine and do some inward reflection.

Since my installation as the 41st Prior Provincial of the Augustinian Province of St. Thomas of Villanova in June,

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A Profile in Augustinian Leadership

Featuring

▶ Watch Fr. Hagan's Video Invitation

Kyle Neptune

William B. Finneran Head Men's
Basketball Coach, Villanova University

And Introducing

Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A.

Prior Provincial,
Province of St. Thomas
of Villanova



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2022

6:00 - 8:30 PM | Overbrook Golf Club
799 Godfrey Road, Villanova, Pennsylvania

For details and to register, visit:
AugustinianFund.org/overbrook

Proceeds to benefit the Augustinian Fund

Questions? Contact Madonna Sutter at
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Cover

Prior General Fr. Alejandro, O.S.A.,
at the Installation Mass of new Prior
Provincial Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A.





*(l-r) Fr. Jeremy Hiers, O.S.A.,
Fr. Frank Doyle, O.S.A.,
Fr. Aldo Potencio, O.S.A.*

Peacemakers

BY JONATHAN JEROME,
DIRECTOR OF THE SHRINE

▶ Watch Jonathan's Video of Gratitude

Unite



Thousands of you joined us here at the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia for our celebration of the Solemn Feast of St. Rita. On behalf of the Augustinian friars, lay staff, volunteers, and patrons, I want to thank you. Thank you for joining us. Thank you for entrusting us with your prayers and petitions. Thank you for introducing us to your family members and friends. And most of all, thank you for helping us honor our beloved patroness.

There's no question about it, St. Rita lived a remarkable life of faith. In the midst of controversy, conflict, and tragedy she was able to persevere and found great hope in the love of Christ. In our wounded world today, gun violence and war, isolation and fear, doubt and anxiety, illness and uneasiness plague individuals and communities. The life of St. Rita reminds us that even when things feel impossible, nothing is impossible to God.

That's why we gathered together at her feast, to find great hope, to build courage and become emboldened as a community of faith. As we go back out into the world, we attempt, like St. Rita, to be peacemakers, healers, and





Fr. William Gabriel, O.S.A.

reconcilers, people who persevere and find hope even in those difficult circumstances and situations. We hope that whether you joined us in person or virtually, you know you have a spiritual home here with us throughout the year. Together, we can continue to be the people God has created us to be.

Once again, thank you for joining us. And be assured of our prayers for you and our world as we continue to be the peacemakers that we are called to be. May God bless you, and St. Rita keep praying for us! ✠



*Jonathan Jerome,
Director of the Shrine*



Connect with Us!


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facebook: @SaintRitaShrine
instagram: @saintritashrine
website: SaintRitaShrine.org
phone: 215.546.8333

Around the Province

February
11




Fr. John Lydon, O.S.A., was recognized for his work of six years as the president of the Catholic University of Trujillo, Peru.

 [Read More on Fr. Lydon Award](#)

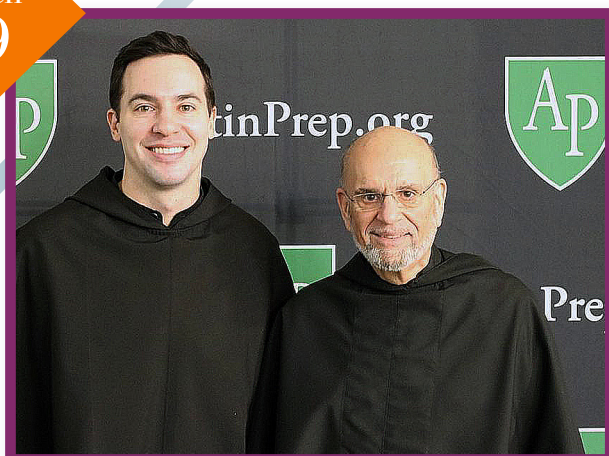
March
28



Fr. Joseph Farrell, O.S.A., converses with Prior General Fr. Alejandro, O.S.A.

 [Read More on Fr. Alejandro at Merrimack](#)

March
29



Fr. Bill with Fr. Jorge Reyes, O.S.A.

Fr. Bill Gabriel, O.S.A., was this year's St. Augustine Lecturer at St. Austin Prep School.



*(l-r) Fr. Jack Deegan, O.S.A.,
Joseph Micucci and
Lacie Ann Michaelson*

April
3

Archbishop Perez celebrated Easter with us by presiding over the Mass at St. Thomas of Villanova Church.

[View Easter Mass Photos](#)

EWTN televised a special Healing Mass at the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia for the Order of Malta.

[Watch Healing Mass Summary](#)

A.D.R.O.P. showed their appreciation to special honoree Joseph Micucci, a long-time volunteer, supporter, and friend.



*(l-r) Fr. Kevin DePrinzio, O.S.A., Fr. Joseph Calderone, O.S.A.,
Archbishop Nelson Perez, Fr. Peter Donohue, O.S.A. and
Fr. Aldo Potencio, O.S.A.*

April
9

April
23



Fr. Jeremy Hiers, O.S.A., blesses a Knight during the Mass

April
30



*This bench was created by sculptor Marco
Di Piazza, a good friend of Fr. Brian*

This marble bench in the shape of a boat was created to honor the memory of Fr. Brian Lowery, O.S.A., who served in San Gimignano for many years. It represents the journey we all take in life.

[Watch the Bench Tribute](#)

— continued on next page



May
5

Br. Atsushi Kuwahara, O.S.A.,
underwent his Solemn Profession
at the St. Augustine Kasai Catholic
Church, Tokyo.

[View Solemn Profession Photos](#)

Philadelphia Auxiliary Bishop
Timothy Senior prepares to bless
the Sister of the Liberty Bell with some
assistance from Fr. Bill Waters, O.S.A.
Bishop Senior remarked that the Sister
Bell is a reminder that “the precious
gift of religious freedom cannot be
taken for granted.”

[Watch Sister Bell Ceremony](#)



May
8

[Read More on Sister Bell](#)



May
12

Fr. Arthur Johnson, O.S.A.,
was presented the Head of
School’s Medallion for his
dedication and commitment
to Austin Prep since its
conception.



June
1

Br. Michael Riggs, O.S.A.,
renewed his simple vows on
June 1 at the National Shrine
of St. Rita.



June
13

Fr. Rob shares a moment with the Vicar General and Prior general, after being installed as the new Prior Provincial.

[View Fr. Rob Installation Photos](#)

Former teammates and forever friends, Jay Wright and Fr. Rob, reconnect at Fr. Rob's Installation Mass. The Installation Mass took place at the St. Thomas of Villanova Church on Villanova's campus. This celebratory occasion marked the beginning of Fr. Rob's first four-year term as the province's 41st provincial. Over 500 people attended the Mass, with 300+ joining us virtually via livestream.



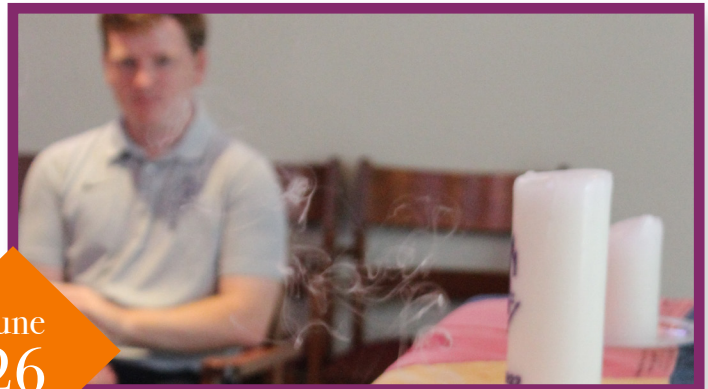
June
13



June
15

Fr. William (Bill) Faix, O.S.A, who is in his 90's, gave a talk at the Connelly center during this year's Chapter.

At the End of the Year Mass, Augustinian Volunteers blew out their last candle – a moving tribute to the closing of the cherished, 20 year program.



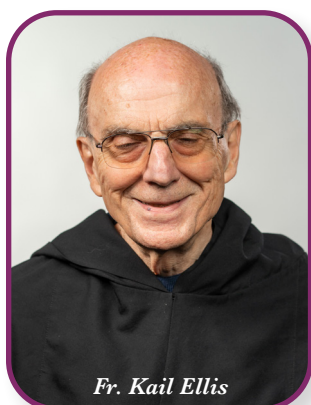
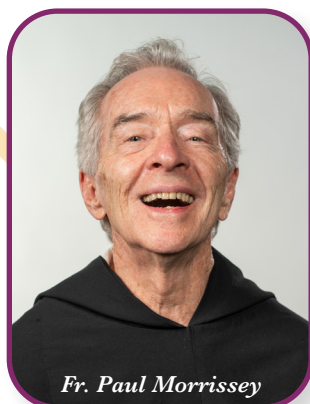
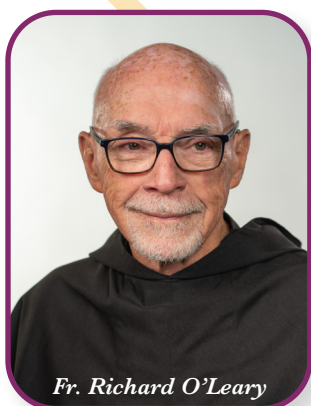
June
26



All Smiles at the Chapter

“One of the many tasks the friars have on their schedules this week at the Provincial Chapter is taking new headshots. While it’s perhaps not the most exciting thing on their to-do list, the Province will use these headshots for the next four years. While there are plenty of very professional pictures, we like to see when the friar’s personality can’t help but shine through. We love these photos from the Fathers and we’re sure you will too!”

– Sarah Reisert, Assistant Director of Engagement

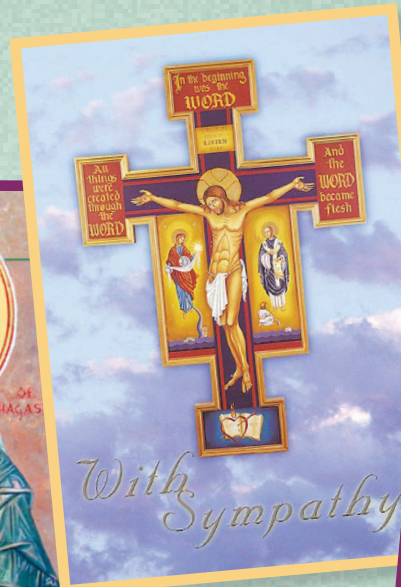


Augustinian Guild

The Augustinian Guild was established to share the spiritual riches of the Augustinian Friars with others. Individuals enrolled in the Guild (whether living or deceased) through one of our beautiful Mass cards share in our Masses, prayers, and ministry.

Donations to the Guild assist us in our Province mission, in the care of elderly and infirm friars, and in the training and education of new members to the Order.

– Sarah Reisert, Assistant Director of Engagement



Cards are available for all occasions,
whether it be a *joyous* celebration, a *treasured* anniversary,
or a way to *honor* the death of a loved one.

To order Mass cards, visit AugustinianFund.org/mass-cards
or contact Maria Manna at maria.manna@augustinian.org or 610.527.3330, ext. 240

Augustinian Volunteers

Met the Challenge



Fr. Joe Mostardi, O.S.A., with Augustinian Volunteers



BY FR. JOE MOSTARDI, O.S.A.

Dear Augustinian Volunteers and friends of the Augustinians,

In 1999, I was invited by our provincial, Fr. Jack Deegan, to consider organizing a volunteer program made up of young adults who had a desire to serve the poor and needy in conjunction with the various apostolates of our Province and Order. This was not a new concept, as there were already several other religious communities engaged in such a program. Prior to my direct involvement, I was invited, while being pastor of our parish on Staten Island, to participate in what might become a pilot program for volunteers. Fr. Ray Jackson, who was working in campus ministry already, saw the potential of having Villanova students volunteer for a short- or long-term period after graduation from college. This was to provide them with a chance to see the needs of the poor and marginalized while allowing our parishes and schools to share in the enthusiasm and vision that these young volunteers could bring to our ministries.

Due to his untimely death, the program did not materialize as he dreamed. In an effort to respond to the needs of the poor, our Province invested both personnel and financial support to what would eventually become the Augustinian Volunteers. Twenty-two years later, we have found it necessary to formally close this chapter of the program, not because we no longer see it as viable but because of changes brought on initially by COVID-19, coupled with various changes culturally within our nation. Deciding to end our volunteer program was not an easy decision. Those of us who have been active in supporting this program may at first see this as a tremendous loss for our Province. We all know that at times all good things come to an end when the end is the only way to see a new beginning.

To the over 400 alums of this program who have shared with us this ministry, I have grown in an appreciation of what a few can accomplish when we work together. Having served as the founding director for eight years and as a constant presence on the Advisory Board, I have seen lives changed, hope instilled in others, and incredible accomplishments in places like South Africa, Peru, and various cities in the United States, where we have served over the years.

Our volunteer program was created with a hope that it might grow each year. What has actually happened one cannot calculate or completely comprehend, but we can mourn the loss of what could have been, while simultaneously being proud of everything we have accomplished throughout the years. We did far more than what any of us expected.

*We did far more than what
any of us expected.*

Now is the time we look ahead to what might become our next effort in reaching out to the poor. The decline in the number of interested young adults within every program of this nature, was partially the sign that things were changing. Many of the social services that once supported our volunteers have ceased to exist, or their funding dried up. The impact of COVID-19 created many unique voids in our way of living. This program was only one of many casualties of the pandemic.

As we move forward in the joyful hope that inspired Fr. Jackson to initially attempt to create such a program, we now pause to see where all this might take us as we reconsider whatever might lie ahead. Those who have served as an AV, keep volunteering and share your Augustinian energy with your family, friends, and your children who might very well be the next generation of Augustinian Volunteers.





Eager for Transformation With a Restless Heart



Hannah Kunberger

From Hannah Kunberger Interim Director

For me, like so many others, it began with a green door. On a scorching hot day in August 2008, my parents dropped me off in a church parking lot in Center City Philadelphia with two suitcases and sweaty palms. I introduced myself to a few friendly looking strangers and before long, there were 24 of us walking through a nondescript green door at the edge of the lot. I never would have guessed that the door would lead us to a rickety winding staircase and then a massive warehouse-style apartment that would be our home base for the next eight days of orientation. This is how the Augustinian Volunteer experience always begins, by walking through a door where you have no idea what is on the other side, by saying “yes” before you know what you’re saying

“yes” to. In other words, it begins with a leap of faith.

Over the last 22 years, volunteers have served in the Bronx, New York; San Diego, California; Camden, New Jersey; Lawrence, Massachusetts; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Chicago, Illinois; Ventura, California; San Gimignano, Italy; Durban, South Africa and Chulucanas, Peru. They have served as computer teachers, physical education teachers, English teachers, aids, tutors, mentors, campus ministers, case workers, program workers, intake coordinators and nurses. They have worked in children’s homes, elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, clinics, food pantries, social service organizations, group homes, legal aid organizations and an HIV/AIDS respite.

Much has been achieved through the hundreds of thousands of hours of work put in by volunteers over the last 22 years. As service site partners would attest, many programs, classes and retreats simply would not have happened without the energy,

optimism and tenacity of these young adults. Having walked with the volunteers for nearly 12 years, I can confidently say that there is no achievement as meaningful as the transformative relationships that have been built as a result of the Augustinian Volunteer experience.

If I were to guess, I would say that nearly every one of the 400 young adults who have served as AVs questioned the wisdom of their “yes.” Life-changing decisions are like that, uncomfortable and

— continued on next page

*It begins with
a leap of
faith.*



*2014 Volunteers land in LA,
before going to Ventura, CA*



Basil Pattammady served at HELP of Ojai from 2020-2021 in Ventura, CA

sometimes even unpleasant. Above all, the Augustinian Volunteer experience forces all of us into relationship with one another. These relationships can be beautiful and sometimes lifelong, but they can also be messy and difficult. They can force us to see and accept difficult truths about ourselves, about each other and about our world and the many broken systems in it. As a result, change happens in dramatic ways, like a shift in career path after a breakthrough with a difficult student. It also happens in subtle ways, like choosing to withhold judgement about others who are on a different path. Year after year, in ways too numerous to remember, much less list, I have seen God transform us all through one another.

Like Augustine, volunteers walk through that green door with a restless heart, eager for transformation. What's on the other side is unknown and almost always unexpected. And now we stand together on another precipice. As the Augustinian Volunteer program comes to a close, we take a new leap of faith. We have faith that we will continue to be transformed. We have faith the seeds we have sown will continue to bear fruit in the schools and organizations we have served with for so many years. We have faith that others will take up our work in new and exciting ways. We have faith that the Augustinian Volunteers is above all, not a program, but a community.



2001 Volunteers

 *Click to comment on this article*

A note to Joanna...

Former Director
of the Augustinian Volunteers



Joanna Bowen

My name is Nicole (Quirk) Yoakum and I served as an Augustinian Volunteer from 2015-2016 at St. Augustine HS in San Diego and then as a Site Supervisor at "Saints" until 2021. So much of who I am today is due to the influence that the volunteer program had on my life. The AVs brought me to San Diego, it landed me my first job where I met my husband, it gave me my closest friends and it introduced me to people who left lasting impressions in my life, one of which is Joanna Bowen. I met Joanna as a new graduate out of college and was so inspired by her. She could do it all ... in the middle of our orientation, she ran a 10k before we had all even woken up. Over the years I realized that Joanna's ability to do it all was something that she always lived out. She was always down for anything - even hosting a group of 30 of my students for a BBQ in the parking lot of Old St. Augustine Parish. No idea is too crazy for Joanna; she loves a challenge and this ability to look at any opportunity as an adventure is something that I strive to emulate in my life. While I will miss catching up with Joanna when she is in town for her site visits, I know that our friendship will carry on for years to come.

By Nicole (Quirk) Yoakum



Nicole Yoakum (far right) with volunteers at San Diego's St. Augustine High School's campus ministry office, in 2021 and Fr. Maxime Villeneuve of the California Province (left)

Augustinian Journey

An App on
Our Way to God

Following St. Augustine's lead, we have established this virtual community to reflect on a spirituality that calls us together to know and love God, each other, and the world we share. Join us on this journey!

App Highlights

PRAY

Augustine for Today: Daily inspiration from St. Augustine for 365 days of the year.

LISTEN

PODCASTS – Healing Mass Homilies: The National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia presents homilies and prayers for healing by Augustinian Friars.

MUSIC: "He who sings," said St. Augustine, "prays twice." Hear Fr. Joe Genito, O.S.A., perform his inspirational classics.

SHARE

Send a Candle: Extend good wishes and prayers with a personal blessing to a fellow traveler for a special occasion, achievement, or in a moment of need.

Download the FREE App today
available for phone and tablet



*Fr. John
Abubakar, O.S.A.*

PRAYERS + PODCASTS AND MUSIC + SAINTS AND BLESSED + FAITH SHARING

Tolle Lege Day 2022

BY SARAH REISERT
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT

Raises Over \$400,000



Tolle Lege Day
One Mind, One Heart.

To Support the Friars

Over 1,000 donors made this the biggest Tolle Lege Day yet!

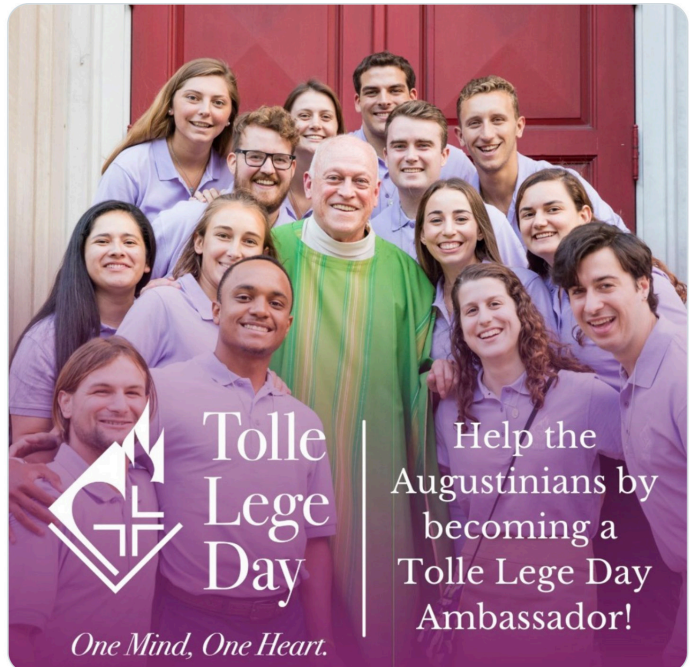
Thank you for coming together with one mind and one heart during Tolle Lege Day, the Augustinians' annual giving day! The outpouring of love and support was even greater this year than our inaugural giving day in 2021. We're pleased to announce that over 1,000 donors donated over \$400,000 in 24 hours to support the Augustinian charism and way of life.

"On behalf of all my Augustinian brothers, I want to take this opportunity to thank you most sincerely for your generous outpouring of support and your devotion to us on Tolle Lege Day," said Vicar Provincial Fr. Frank Doyle, O.S.A. "We are enormously grateful for your kindness not just now but always, as well as your friendship and continued



Jay Wright @VUCoachJWright · Apr 24

Consider donating to the backbone of our @VillanovaU community - Annual Augustinian Day of Giving - Tolle Lege Day



Sarah Reisert
April 24 · 48

Villanovans! Fellow parishioners at St. Thomas of Villanova! Did you know that any gifts you make to those institutions "don't" support the Augustinian Friars who run them? So if you ever took a theater class with Fr. Peter, got married by one of the Fr. Joes, or are just a VU basketball fan and really love Fr. Rob, consider making a gift to the Augustinians today on their day of giving. Every gift matters, no matter the size. (We mean that! We're counting donors today, not dollars.) You can donate at tolllege.day.augustinianfund.org, by phone at 610-616-3748, or by Venmo @AugustinianFund. Have any questions? Let me know!



Josh Weiner, Jessica Wa and 6 others

support, which allows us to further our ministries, to care for the elderly and infirm of our Province and to educate and train future members of our Order."

A special thank you goes out to our 120 Tolle Lege Day Ambassadors, including 25 Augustinian Friars who contacted friends and family all over the world to ask for support of the friars' way of life and their ministries. Won't you consider serving as a Tolle Lege Day Ambassador next year to help us spread the word? ✠



Augustinian Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova

April 24 · 🌐

Fr. Joe Farrell, O.S.A. and Fr. Jack Flynn, O.S.A. are joining us by video all the way from Rome for #TolleLegeDay! We're only about 120 donors away from unlocking our next challenge gift – won't you help us start off the afternoon on the right foot? Make your donation at tollelegeday.augustinianfund.org, by phone at 610-616-3748, or by Venmo @AugustinianFund – no gift is too small!



Tolle Lege Day Greetings from Fr. Joe Farrell, O.S.A. and Fr. Jack Flynn, O.S.A. in Rome!

Call now

👍❤️ Ted Latham and 27 others

2 Comments 2 Shares

Your Impact

Because of YOU, our second annual Tolle Lege Day was even better than our first!



1,021
Donors



\$415,697
Dollars Raised



1,111
Total Gifts



284
New Donors



33
States plus
Washington DC



120
Ambassadors



Chesley Turner

April 24 · 🌐

Tolle Lege Day! Donate with the link in my bio to support the Augustinians. Hearts on Fire: no matter which Augustinian church you wander into across the globe, you'll find the heart on fire, pierced with an arrow, and flanked by a book. Usually in the company of some greats like St. Thomas of Villanova, St. Nicholas of Tolentine, and Our Mother of Good Council. I'm grateful for the Augustinian values of Unitas, Veritas, and Caritas, and the charism of community, the sense of belonging and the friends they have brought me.



Save the Date

Tolle Lege Day 2023, Monday, April 24!

Meet Our New Prior Provincial

FR. ROBERT P. HAGAN, O.S.A.



St. Dorothy 8th grade graduation, 1979

I am humbled and honored by God's call as well as my brothers' willingness to entrust me with the responsibility of serving as Prior Provincial for the Augustinian Province of St. Thomas of Villanova. As I reflect on my journey to this place in my life, I am reminded of St. John Paul II:

“ Our lives are not a series of random disconnected events one after another, but rather, each experience builds on the one that preceded it and prepares us for the next and the thread of the Holy Spirit ties them all together ... Let us then go forward in peace and unafraid. ”



Fr. Rob and his mother at First Vows, 1999

Q: How have your family and others influenced your life?

My mom, Marilyn, and dad, Robert, did their best to raise me and my three sisters. They sent us to Catholic school and instilled the importance of faith, hard work, education, and helping others. My dad passed away at a young age, so mom was left to do most of the heavy lifting. As a result, I have been inspired by strong, empowered women who have leaned on their faith and worked hard to improve

the lives of others. Mom, as a single parent, instilled in my three sisters and me the importance of bringing one's faith into everything we do. Faith was important to Mom, not just on Sunday, but every day and it was her faith in God that sustained her and helped her overcome many challenges and difficulties in life. I am grateful for these and other influences in my life that have helped me see the hand of God guiding me through this journey of life. My sisters are Mary Ellen, an attorney for a nonprofit organization, Beth, an executive director of Action Wellness in Philadelphia and Meg, a critical care



Fr. Rob's Ordination with his mother and sisters, 2003

nurse at Presbyterian Hospital in Philadelphia for almost 30 years. They and their loving husbands and my nieces and nephews have given me a source of great joy and strength in my life.

Q: What/who inspired you to become an Augustinian?

I am from Drexel Hill, PA. However, whenever I say that, the next question people ask is: "What year did you get out of Monsignor Bonner High School?" I did not go to Bonner, but as a St. Dorothy's kid who went to Cardinal O'Hara High School and Villanova University, I met many positive influences in my life. I met Fr. Bill Atkinson, O.S.A., who was uncle to friends of mine growing up. As many know, he was injured in a toboggan accident in the seminary and became the first quadriplegic ever ordained a priest. I was inspired by a man who never gave up and found joy through the roughest of circumstances. He became a friend and mentor and helped me come to see that life as an Augustinian might be where God was calling me too.

I definitely did not set out to become an Augustinian nor a priest. However, my father passed away in his sleep at the age of 47 when I was in high school. While this was incredibly hard on my mom and family at the time, it has ironically turned out to be one of the greatest gifts my dad could have ever passed on to me. "Life is short, make it count." That thought and sense of urgency has burned within my heart from a young age, and as time moved on, I have come to know that this is very Augustinian. We all have restless hearts, and mine is no exception.

Off to college, 1983



The question then becomes: What am I going to fill that restlessness with? That desire for something more? I came to slowly realize, as Augustine did, that only God can fill that gap within our heart. The more I tried to fill it with something else – ambition, wealth, material success – the more it felt like drinking salt water.

It only made me thirstier. I slowly came to the realization that God has a plan for each of us, and if we trust and follow his plan, we will find our peace, joy and destiny. My enthusiasm, purpose and mission in life come from helping other people find that for themselves too ... through the grace of God.

Q: What did you do before you became an Augustinian?

After graduating from Villanova University in 1987, I attended the Delaware School of Law. Through college and law school I worked as a bartender. That was a formative experience in my life as I was put in touch with people from all walks of life who were often looking for someone to listen to them.



Delaware School of Law, 1990

— continued on next page

Fr. Rob extends a blessing with the St. Rita relic during a Healing Mass at the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia, 2010

My friends have joked with me saying I have heard more confessions at the bar than as a priest! While in law school I clerked for the Honorable Charles C. Keeler in the Common Pleas Court of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, and upon graduation in 1990 was hired by Gillin and Associates, where I worked as a trial attorney for 7 years. While at the law firm, I served primarily as criminal defense counsel to many clients. I believe this again was the hand of the Lord leading me with the opportunity to assist those who had made poor choices or decisions, but were not bad people. My faith in a God of second chances was reinforced and I spent much time talking and preparing cases and witnesses while also helping people find the peace and forgiveness that God offers to all of us.

I can remember one evening coming home from having won a long and difficult case. I was feeling pretty good

about myself and my personal situation as I sat down to dinner and to watch an episode of Jeopardy. As I was thinking of whether I might start my own firm or embark on an offer of partnership with the firm, I heard the contestant say: "I will take quotable quotes for \$400, Alex." Alex proceeded to say: "authored the phrase 'give me chastity, but not yet.'" To which the contestant responded: "Who was St. Augustine!" Having been discerning on my own, and meeting many

good natured Augustinians along the way, I was still not completely sure what a calling looked like. I thought to myself, "This guy Augustine keeps showing up!"

Over time I came to understand the notion of God's calling, not so much as a lightning bolt moment, such as Moses seeing the burning bush or Paul legendarily being knocked off his horse. Rather, I



came to understand calling as more of a whisper in the heart or continuous light tap on the shoulder. After some 10 years of thinking God might go away ... I decided this must be real and if God is truly asking me to serve in this way, it is there that I will find my peace and happiness. Once again God was right!

Q: Where does your connection to St. Rita come from?

I wasn't in the Order very long before I realized that I share something in common with St. Rita. I was born on her Feast Day, May 22. I came to know her as a strong woman who shifted vocational paths in the middle of her life. Someone who was married with children only to find herself in the midst of the loss of her husband and children, but still not alone in the world. She accepted suffering and hardship and was able to find peace in her life and help others find peace too. Rita is known as a Peacemaker, and I have not met anyone on this earth who is not in some way, shape or form desirous of peace in their life, mind, heart, family or situation. I encounter many people who are struggling, much like Rita did. I introduce them



Cutting down the net after Villanova becomes NCAA National Champions, 2018



(l-r) Fr. Brian Mohan, Fr. Joseph Narog and Fr. Rob

“I will serve and work with my brothers. Together, we will care for one another and the people we serve.”

to her and let Rita do what Rita does. She intercedes! She works in collaboration with the Lord and helps guide wounded souls to healing and recovery. I have seen firsthand the incredible work being done at the National Shrine of St. Rita. Her spirit is real, and lives are being transformed down there as well as all around the world as a result of the intercession from one who chose love and forgiveness in the face of murder, violence and hatred. The world could certainly use more of that today, and Rita will continue to inspire those who feel their hope is lost. People are transformed and hope is restored.

Q: In what ministries have you served as an Augustinian friar?

Since entering the Order I have had the opportunity to wear a few hats, it is never boring! I have served as a parish assistant for the past 19 years at St. Paul's and St. Mary Magdalene Parish in South Philadelphia. The people of the parish know and love the Augustinians and are familiar with our charism of friendship and hospitality. I have worked in administration for Villanova University, for many years, most specifically as associate athletics director, with a primary focus on student athlete welfare, sports medicine and performance. The students, coaches, faculty and staff have impacted my life in many profound ways. I have had opportunities to teach as well as serve as team chaplain for our student athletes. **The wins and losses come and go but the relationships and opportunities for growth in mind, body and spirit are what makes the experience so worthwhile.** This experience has helped me cultivate friendships and relationships that will last a lifetime. I had the incredible privilege of serving with some of my Augustinian brothers at SCI-Chester as a prison chaplain. This is a state correctional institution, and the inmates are just like you and me. I have learned a great deal from these faith-filled men. They may have made a poor choice or committed some act of wrongdoing, but they are also sisters and brothers who are rehabilitating themselves, and worthy of God's love, mercy, grace and redemption just like us!

Q: What are your plans as Prior Provincial?

People have asked: what it is that we are going to do, and that is understandable. Pope Francis has invited all of us in the larger Church to a time of Synodality. This is an invitation to listen and discern in and through the Holy Spirit. As Augustinians, this concept has become the focal point of our Provincial Chapter. We will gather, we will talk, plan and discuss. But first, we will pray and listen and open our hearts and minds to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. There are certainly concrete matters to discuss such as: How we can respond to the changing needs of the church and world? How can we find creative ways to impact the world through peace and justice? How can we collaborate better with Augustinians from around the world as well as our sisters and brothers who are not in religious life but still share our Augustinian heart?

As Prior Provincial, I look forward to the guidance provided by the Holy Spirit who has led our Order from the beginning. I will serve and work with my brothers. Together, we will care for one another and the people we serve. We will pray, we will listen, and then filled with God's wisdom and grace, we will act. We welcome all our Augustinian sisters, brothers and friends who will pray with us and work with us to help bring the Good News, the light and the hope of the Gospel to all parts of the world! ✠



*(l-r) Vicar General Fr. Joseph Farrell, O.S.A.,
Prior Provincial Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A.,
Prior General Fr. Alejandro Moral Antón, O.S.A.*

Meet Our New Provincial Council



**Fr. Aldo
Potencio, O.S.A.**

*Province Secretary
and Treasurer*



**Fr. Robert
Guessetto, O.S.A.**

*Assistant Shrine Director
National Shrine of St. Rita
of Cascia*



**Fr. Luis
Vera, O.S.A.**

*Pastor of St. Nicholas
of Tolentine parish,
Bronx, New York*



**Fr. Joseph L.
Narog, O.S.A.**

*Vocation Director and
Candidate/Pre-Novice
Director for the Province*



**Fr. Kevin
DePrinzio, O.S.A., Ph.D.**

*Vice President,
Mission and Ministry,
Villanova University*



**Fr. Raymond
Dlugos, O.S.A.**

*Vice President,
Mission and Ministry,
Merrimack College*



**Fr. James D.
Paradis, O.S.A.**

*Prior of the local community of
friars at St. Augustine Parish
Certified pastoral counselor*

*We congratulate
all of you on your new
appointments and we look
forward to your spirit-led governance!*



VOCATION

Notes of Gratitude

BY FR. JOSEPH NAROG, O.S.A.
DIRECTOR OF VOCATIONS

Thank you to the members of our Province's Vocation Admissions Screening Board! These include: Mrs. Kathleen Byrnes; Mr. Michael Gaynor (newest member – joined in 2021); Mrs. Eileen King-English; Fr. Joe Mostardi, O.S.A.; Fr. Bob Murray, O.S.A.; and Fr. Jim Paradis, O.S.A. Chaired by Fr. Joe Narog, O.S.A. and assisted by Mrs. Bernadette DiLucido, Vocation Office Administrative Assistant, the Board meets, at least on an annual basis, to screen applicants for our Province's Candidacy/Pre-Novitiate Program.

Thank you, as well, to the members of the Province's Vocation Advisory Board who have been serving faithfully since its inception in January 2019! These include: Mrs. Nancy Costello; Mr. Michael Cunningham; Sr. Ivette Diaz, R.S.M.; Sr. Charlene Diorka, S.S.J.; Mr. Dennis Murphy; Fr. Aldo Potencio, O.S.A.; and Ms. Chesley Turner. For three and a half years, they have been meeting on a quarterly basis, supporting the Province's Vocation Director and the Vocation Office. In addition, the eighth slot on the Board has been reserved for friars currently in or who have recently completed initial formation. These have included: Fr. Elizandro Contreras, O.S.A. (current member); Fr. Bill Gabriel, O.S.A.; and Fr. Jeremy Hiers, O.S.A. Moving forward, members will begin rotating off the Board, as new individuals are brought on for three-year terms.

Save the Date **Vocation Awareness Week | Nov 13-20, 2022**



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Life Over the Falls:

The Presence of Fr. Bill

BY AFY INYANG
COMMUNICATIONS
MANAGER

The Strength of Others

“
*Taught me to Live, not just to Cope
With their Love they gave me Hope.*

- Fr. Bill Atkinson O.S.A.

“I look forward to you joining us when we visit Msgr. Bonner / Archbishop Prendergast High School on Monday. Don't be surprised if you get a true feel for the presence of Fr. Bill in the school and on the grounds.” As I read the ending of this email from Mary Moody, cousin and close confidant to Fr. Bill Atkinson, I found myself intrigued and wondering what my visit to Bonner would hold in store for me.

When I first moved into my office last October, I was greeted by a poster of Fr. Atkinson on my wall, beatifically smiling down at me. As an outsider to the Villanova community and the Augustinian family, this was my first encounter with the revered future legend himself. While settling into my new surroundings, I noticed bookmarks, prayer cards, event programs, all bearing his image. In fact, one of the first social media posts I shared was Fr. Rob's Fox29 interview in which he discusses Fr. Atkinson's legacy, and the current process being undertaken to push for his canonization.

After watching his documentary I found myself deeply affected emotionally. That feeling grew more intense as I realized that part of my job would be to help promote his cause and spread his story to the masses. I cannot put into words how it feels to know that my work contains such sacred purpose. It's almost surreal that I am privileged enough to invest my energy

toward enshrining his legacy into the consecrated canon of our Holy Mother Church. This man is a big deal, I mused to myself. His presence seemed larger than life. However, I also found myself wondering, *who is he to people who knew him most intimately?*

As I watched Fr. Rob's Inauguration and observed the future of our Province being ceremonially carried out, my mind suddenly took me back to a tender moment I had experienced at Bonner the previous week. It was the very moment that Mary Moody had electronically prophesied what I would experience once I entered the school building. As I stood in front of Fr. Atkinson's mural, I gazed at length at the countless people who surrounded him so joyfully, so full of devotion. I stole glances at the people around me in that instant.



(l-r) Marge Roccio, retired secretary at Bonner of 25 years, with Mary Moody under the tree where Fr. Bill would cheer on Bonner athletes

Father Bill Atkinson Center



Michael Farrell, student of Fr. Bill and caregiver, viewing the mural, outside the Fr. Bill Atkinson Center at Msgr. Bonner / Archbishop Prendergast High School

Everyone was quiet, lost in their treasured memories of Fr. Bill. My heart grew heavy when I heard some sniffles, and glimpsed hands going to mouths and chests, or reaching out to touch certain pictures. As someone who lost her father at an early age, I instinctively recognized the attempts to hold back the very physical feeling of weighted grief. The sharp (or dull) heartache that arises when you are torn between the love you felt, the pure moments you can never forget, and the jagged, raw pain that you will always grapple with, on some level.

The weight of Fr. Atkinson's transcendental existence will continue to exert its gentle, yet enduring force in our community's past, present, and our remote future. As we invite the world in and share with them this example of an almost seemingly perfect life, full of saintly attributes and selfless devotion, let us also remember Fr. Atkinson by his more common titles. He was – is – a brother, a teacher, a fellow friar, an uncle, a mentor, and a pillar in our community. He loved jigsaw and crossword puzzles, and playing the card game pinochle. Whenever he danced, he would shimmy his elbow up and down to the tunes of '50/'60s music, or to his favorite entertainer of all time, Elvis; Blue Christmas is one of his favorite songs. He also had a quirky penchant for putting ketchup on everything and likewise, loved Tootsie Roll Pops.

He was fervently doted upon and compassionately cared for by this amazing community, or rather, our amazing Augustinian infused family. We must

always remember that our holy ones are also fully human. Let us hear from some members of our community as they share special stories about Fr. Bill that have never been shared before.

As you read these stories I hope they touch you as deeply as they touched me. I named this write-up "Life Over the Falls" in reference to a quote by Fr. Bill in the book "Green Bananas: The Wisdom of Fr. Bill Atkinson" by Steve McWilliams.

Allow me to reintroduce Fr. Atkinson to you in a way you probably haven't seen him presented before. As a very real person, made of flesh, fears, and fun. Someone you and I could easily relate to, without intimidation, or believing you had to "clean up your act" in any manner. I hope that these stories help you revel in the beauty of our shared humanity.



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Joan Mullen

Joan Mullen

How about the Diaconate?

It was the beginning of autumn 1973. Bill was anxiously planning for his Diaconate in the Order of St. Augustine and choosing a date and place for his Ordination ceremony, a feat he had studied for and which was coming to fruition finally. A happy time, one would think, but as Bill found in his already young life, “Nothing is easy.”

Our mother was in the hospital, fighting the fight again with cancer. Bill wanted her to be an integral part of these celebrations as she had been the motivating force in those death defining days that pulled him through. I happened to stop to see Bill one afternoon, and he outlined his plan. Bill expressed his hope to me to be ordained on our parents’ wedding anniversary, February 2, 1974, with Mom and Dad present. Bill asked me what I thought.

I didn’t have to guess how much thought and time was devoted to this decision, but I was leery. He wanted it so much. I told him it was a wonderful idea, but just to be safe, rather than guess and plan about Mom’s situation, let’s you and I visit and talk with Mom’s doctor, just the two of us.

The appointment was made and off we went. Bill and I didn’t speak on the way which wasn’t unusual, but I was thankful for it. The office was deathly quiet. We didn’t have to wait too long before the doctor arrived. He was very attentive and professional. Bill explained his plans of the Diaconate and Ordination ceremonies and he was hopeful that our mother would be able to attend these special occasions.

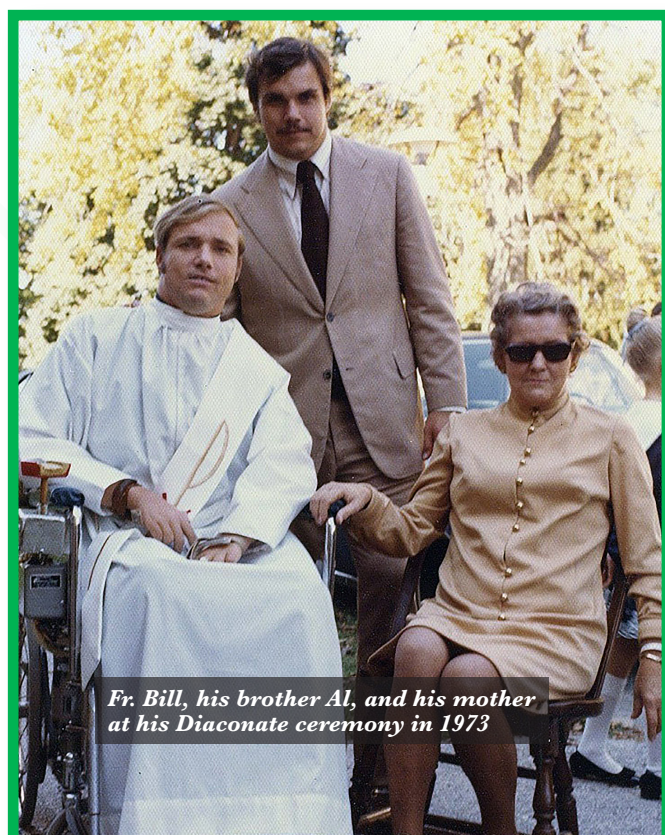
I can still see this scene in my mind all those many years ago, looking at Bill, the ultimate optimist, anticipating a positive

answer, hoping for Bill’s sake we would feel good at any moment. The doctor sat up, folded his hands across his chest and asked the date of our parent’s anniversary and we answered Saturday, February 2. Without even blinking his eye, he answered, “Your mother will not be here then.”

Neither of us said a word. You could hear and feel the silence. I stood to thank the doctor for his candor and taking time to see us when Bill whispered to me, “how about the Diaconate?” I knew what he was thinking so I boldly asked if my mother could attend Bill’s Diaconate ceremony in October. His reply was immediate, “Yes she can.” Our hearts were lifted in thanksgiving. Mom was very weak but aware of the occasion and what was going on. She passed away November 20, 1973, and Bill was ordained on February 2, 1974 as planned.

Looking at Bill, the ultimate optimist, anticipating a positive

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Fr. Bill, his brother Al, and his mother at his Diaconate ceremony in 1973

Dr. Katie Campbell

Give them patience

My degree is in chemical engineering and finance. So as you can imagine, I didn't spend years learning educational pedagogy per se. At 21 years old, I found myself in a high school math classroom having difficulty with a student in my class, and not knowing how to remedy the situation. This is where Fr. Bill enters into the story.

Around October, I was struggling with classroom management, but I had one kid who was really making my life very hard. When I mention this at lunch, Fr. Bill says, "Well, give me his name" and not thinking anything of it, I say his name. Fr. goes down to the office and looks up the kid's schedule. Then he waits until the kid was between two periods or at a period where he really wasn't doing anything. Next he finds his way to be outside of that room. Mind you, he did this not just for me, I can think of 20 teachers who could tell the same story!

Fr. then he rolls up beside and gently taps the student with his chair and the student turns to him and he says, "Can I talk to you for a minute?" There's no one around and it's just him and Fr. and he had this way, and I don't know the exact words he would use, but he would say, tell me about a problem you're having here at school. And then he could hold the silence.



He didn't lead into why he wanted to see the student but just waited patiently. The student would bare their soul and say what their troubles were at home, in the classroom, if there were monetary issues, etc.

And then while they needed him, Fr. Bill would befriend them. He knew their schedule now and he'd find a way of running into them once or twice a week to check in on them and keep tabs.



Fr. Bill and Katie Campbell

He would never share the kids problems. He'd simply say, "Give them patience." So now when the kid sees me with Fr. Bill, the kid associates me as someone Fr. Bill likes and knows.

...it was in him being in the students' day-to-day lives

Though I didn't know what's happening in his background, it changed the dynamic of my whole classroom simply because one person took the time out to ask him what his problems were and not why was he causing problems!

I don't know how to put that into words, but he always had these great ways of corralling them back in. He was in charge of justice under God (JUG), which is when a kid gets in trouble and gets to a certain point of demerits. Instead of calling his parents, the kid would have to go to Fr. Atkinson. If it's the middle of the winter, they'd have to sit in a room. In nice weather, Fr. would teach them how to garden. He would take them outside and show them the grounds and have them help with cleanup. And if they did a really good job, he'd do an activity with them like football or wiffle ball (after service). It got to the point where some kids would want to have detention just to spend their Saturdays with Fr. Atkinson!

Those were his teaching moments. He taught in the class just as well as everyone else when it came to getting this material across. But it was in him being in the students' day-to-day lives and giving them an opportunity to have an adult who would listen (because he never told you what to do) that they flourished. And that, I think, was his gift in teaching.

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Mary Moody

Mary Moody

How many steps?

My cousin, Fr. Bill Atkinson, was injured in 1965, a quarter century before the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) was passed in 1990. So for 25 years, he was faced with all kinds of obstacles whenever he had to leave the door of his home – St. Mary’s

Seminary, or Msgr. Bonner High School. He had countless occasions where he would be invited to functions yet he was unable to get inside the building without the help of three or four people, hauling him and his wheelchair up the steps. Even though people said it was handicapped equipped, it wasn’t until the ADA came into effect that establishments were truly equipped for the handicapped.

For example, my son Ed’s baptism was in July of ‘74. Bill had just been ordained a priest in February. So it was his first baptism since he became ordained as a priest earlier that year, and he was nervous about getting everything right. He even asked one of the seminarians to drive him to our house and go over all the details. That seminarian happened to be Fr. Peter Donohue, current president of Villanova University.

He made his presence known as a witness, especially in the sacraments

The day of the baptism was beautiful and Bill was so happy to be able to do it. He baptized all of the grandchildren, and every one of his nieces and nephews! That is what was amazing about Bill. Over the course of 40 yrs. as a priest he baptized and married most of his nieces and nephews, attended most of their Holy Communion, confirmations and graduations from grammar school and high school along with various universities. He was asked to celebrate the Funeral Mass for family, friends, parents of students and faculty members. He was in attendance at every function if his health allowed.

In fact, the last wedding that he actually did for a family member was my son, Chris, and he was very ill at the time. It was in April 2005, the year before he died. He wasn’t able to celebrate the Mass, so he asked Fr. Hagan to perform the Mass and marriage ceremony, and he then was able to read the Papal Blessing to Chris and Bev with his oxygen tank attached to his wheelchair on the altar. He was determined to be a part of the ceremony since Chris had been one of his caregivers.

Whatever church they belonged to, Bill would be there. However, in every one of those churches, he would always need to be brought up the stairs, which naturally, he didn’t like. Whenever you asked him to do something or come to a function he always wanted to know how many steps were there. That was always his first question.

I’ll never forget my 1988 high school reunion; I invited Bill to celebrate Mass for my fellow graduates. As usual, he asked me “How many steps?”

Back in the day when I went to the school,

I always entered through only one door and there were only two, maybe three steps. So that’s what I told him. I didn’t realize at the time that the door that led to the auditorium had 17 steps that you had to ascend!

He forgave me for it, but I’ll never forget the look on his face when we opened the door and saw all those steps. We had to make some last-minute calls and thankfully Rich Heron, my husband and my two sons were able to come and lift him up all those steps.

On the day that he died, Rich and I knew we had a mission to carry on Bill’s legacy by sharing his determination to “learn to love the life that God gave him.” We didn’t want his memory to be forgotten and we wanted to always remember the love that we shared. I can’t believe it’s been almost 16 years, yet many of the people who loved Bill are still here, keeping his fire alive.



Fr. Bill with Mary’s son William at his confirmation

Michael Farrell

Would you mind opening up that door?

For as many young men who walked the halls of Bonner from the 70s - 90s, there are that many stories of how Fr Bill Atkinson did something (actively or passively) to positively affect their teenage years. Each and every story though would carry a consistent theme ... that Fr. Atkinson's presence was at the core of the impact. Whether it was in the classroom, JUG (after-school detention and stood for Justice Under God), the athletic fields or courts, or just roaming the halls of Bonner, his quiet presence and "showing up" gave us all the opportunity to learn a very valuable lesson. That lesson ... being present, despite how difficult or challenging the path to there is, was Fr. Atkinson's commitment to us.

Sitting in front of him in the class as a student, I always thought about how challenging it must have been to get from his bed to the classroom. It instilled such a humbling gratitude in me for the health and well-being that God had given me

that day. Then, as a caretaker for Fr. Atkinson, I witnessed firsthand that how challenging I thought it was for him to get ready for the day, paled in comparison to what actually took place each and every morning of his life in a wheelchair.

Despite the challenges, Fr. Bill always showed up. There are countless examples: Perhaps he was the moderator of your class and helped with the prom planning, or you were on one of the varied sports teams where he said mass for your team before a game, or he'd roll past you in the hallway and he'd call you by your last name, saying ... "Hey Dolan, would you mind opening up that door for me?" (like any of us ever minded). Hearing him come down the hall,

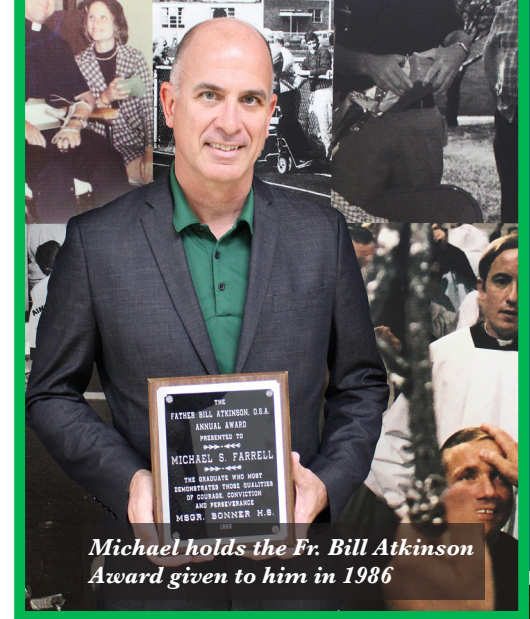
Being present, despite how difficult or challenging the path is – "show up"

into the classroom or chapel made everyone feel better. Fr. Atkinson's presence was welcomed in the moment by every single student at Bonner, and now serves as a constant reminder to all of us of our obligation to "show up."

Finally, a quick, but pretty funny story about Fr. Atkinson's presence in the classroom. After having the tests passed out to everyone and as we all anxiously attacked the questions, Fr. Atkinson would roll his electric wheelchair to a set spot in the room (usually alongside the first aisle). Then, about 10

minutes into the test, after not moving for a while, he would take his arm and touch the control lever on the arm of the wheelchair to generate a sound like he was moving. The first guy to nervously look up and see where he was moving toward, was the one Fr. Atkinson would roll his chair over to just make sure that there wasn't any cheat sheets or wandering eyes going on with that nervous test taker. Wouldn't it be great if we could all hear that chair moving toward us through life to remind us that Fr. Atkinson is watching over us to this day.

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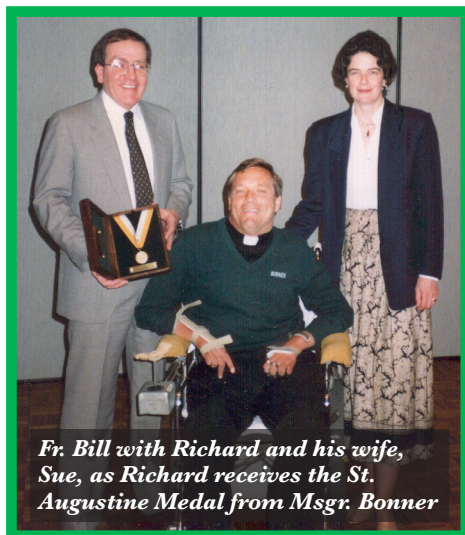


Michael shares with Bonner students the funny story of how Fr. Bill would check to make sure no one was cheating

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Richard Heron

You're more than my arms and my legs



Fr. Bill with Richard and his wife, Sue, as Richard receives the St. Augustine Medal from Msgr. Bonner

I've been taking care of Bill since 1972. I was working at the children's hospital and I heard he was back in McKee again. So I went over to McKee to see him and I asked him at that time, what did he need? He said, well, I need help getting up in the mornings because there's nobody's around in the mornings. I said, well, not a problem, I can come over! That moment turned into a 35-year relationship.

I must point out that the other caretakers and I were able to do what we did because of our wives. They let us off the hooks so that we were able to go to Bonner whenever Bill needed us. As time passed, my wife and I now had two kids to take care of. She and I were in our kitchen one day and she's doing the dishes and I'm at the kitchen table. So I say to her, "I'm thinking about cutting back with Billy, now that we have two kids. It's taking up more time, especially your time." She stops

the dishes and she turns to me and she says, "No, you're not! That's one of the reasons I married you!"

Another incident that sticks out in my memory was when Bill and I went over to the hospital for some tests that his doctor had ordered for him. So he gets the MRI done and we're waiting for the doctor to come out to give us the results. We were waiting in this other room and the doctor comes in and starts talking to me about the results, instead of to Bill who was sitting right there!

And I said, "Excuse me, doc, Fr. here can't move his legs and arms, but his brain is working excellent!" The doctor quickly apologized, up and down. He proceeded to explain to Bill what they found (which was nothing). The situation with the doctor really upset me, because I imagine that that happened way too much to him. When it comes to people who are disabled, for some reason people seem to think that their mental faculties are lacking somehow. It's extremely annoying. As a doctor he should have known better, but you know, everyone has their biases. When we got done and were

ready to walk out, the doctor says to us, 'I learned something today'. I'm happy that the doctor used it as a learning moment and didn't get upset at being corrected.

As Bill & I were leaving to get into the van Bill stops and says to me, 'You're more than my arms and my legs.' This meant a lot to me because Bill was a very shy person. There are people that are naturally quiet, but people wouldn't know that because when they're in public, they give of themselves. That was Bill. When he was in his own surroundings or around loved ones of similar temperament,



Fr. Bill at the First Holy Communion of Richard's son, Austin (far left); also pictured are his son Ted, Richard, his wife Sue, and his mother Mary

they were quiet because they understood each other instinctually. They were communicating with


Bill was a very shy person, but in public he gave of himself



Richard and Sue re-create the moment he received his St. Augustine Medal as they reminisce over Fr. Bill

each other, but not doing it with words upon words. Them just being in each other's presence was enough.

So for Bill to say that to me, it really meant the world to me. It just about blew me away.

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Mary Nikki-Beck

Hug them and say 'I love you'

I consider myself privileged enough to have worked with Fr. Bill at Bonner and at Villanova for the last two years of his life. I worked for an agency and they had asked me to work with Fr. Bill, but I was bit apprehensive initially because of the emotional and mental toll it might take on me to work with him. Eventually I agreed and I started working nights with Fr. Bill. For about two weeks we simply did our routine,

He would share with me his fears about being ill and his mortality

without much being said between the both of us. At this point, I knew nothing about him. Then one day, he woke up in the middle of the night and he told me a really funny joke. And from that night on, we just clicked! He had a great sense of humor.

I went to Catholic school, my whole entire life so I was around priests and priests were like these people who were placed high on a pedestal, and you knew nothing

about them. When we started talking more and more, I realized quickly that he was just a regular, normal person who just happened to dedicate his life to God! It was great because I asked him a lot of questions that I wanted to know about being Catholic, about the priesthood, about God, about everything.



Mary Nikki-Beck

When I met Fr. Bill, I was going through a divorce, and he was going through being ill in the hospital. So we were both fragile in a way. As I got to know him I would sit in the room with him and I would tell about how my marriage was disintegrating, and he would share with me his fears about being ill and his mortality.

I remember he told me something and I think about it every day actually. He said to me when you're married and you don't feel love for that person, you tend to not kiss them or talk to them. You can get angry with them over something stupid and you don't want to be bothered with them.

And so he taught me it's in that moment, that is when you go and hug them and say, I love you. Because in that moment, instead of pulling away and making the love dissipate, you're going toward it. And I always remember that, I'll never forget that. I use that analogy in my life every day.

I can't believe that I met him and he is a Saint to me already. My relationship with him is something that I get to keep with me, for the rest of my life. I literally think about him every single day! ✠



Mary Nikki-Beck with Fr. Bill down the shore

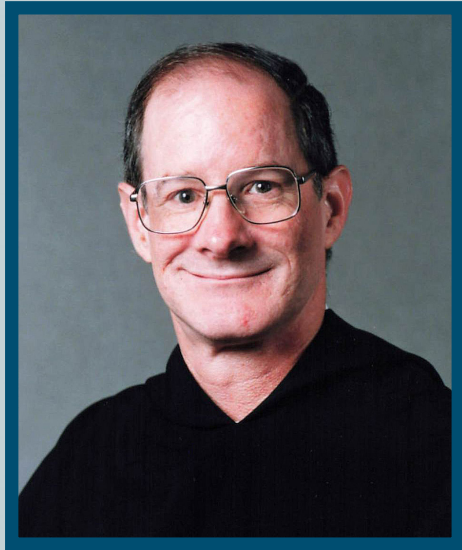


Open your phone's camera app and hover over the QR code to share your Fr. Bill memories

Share your Fr. Bill story
at Augustinian.org/memories

▶ Watch Fr. Rob Hagan Share his Fr. Bill Memories

In Paradisum



Fr. Michael Herbert Stanley, O.S.A.

June 1, 1951—March 24, 2022

Michael Herbert Stanley was born on June 1, 1951, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the son of Herbert A. and Teresa (Finnegan) Stanley. He had three brothers and two sisters. He was baptized on June 24, 1951, at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He attended St. Laurence Parochial School, [Highland Park] Upper Darby, Pennsylvania (1957-1958), and St. Denis Parochial School, Havertown, Pennsylvania, (1958-1965). He then went to Msgr. Bonner High School, Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania (1965-1969). He then attended the University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio (1969-1971), and Villanova University, (1971-1973), graduating with a BA in sociology. He was accepted into the Pre-Novitiate program at Villanova in August 1972 and received into the Order as a novice on August 29, 1974. After a year at Good Counsel Novitiate, New Hamburg, New York,

he professed first vows on August 23, 1975. He then went to Augustinian College, Washington, DC, and attended the Washington Theological Union (1975-1978), where he completed his theological studies, graduating with an M.A. He professed solemn vows on January 20, 1979. In 1979, he went to Japan, where, from 1979 to 1981, he attended language school in Tokyo. He returned to the United States to serve as a deacon at Our Mother of Good Counsel Parish, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. After ordination to the priesthood at Our Mother of Good Counsel Church by Bishop Patrick Ahern, Auxiliary Bishop of New York, on September 19, 1981, he returned to Japan, where he served from 1981 to 2002.

From 1981 to 1989, Fr. Michael was stationed in Our Mother of Consolation Parish, Nagasaki, and from 1989 to 2002 he served in Tokyo as the Formation Director, the Vicariate Treasurer and Vicar of the Japan Vicariate. In 2002, he returned to the United States and was stationed in Upstate New York, first at Saint Mary of the Assumption Parish, Waterford (2002-2003), and Saint Augustine Parish, Troy, (2003-2009). In August 2009, he returned to St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Waterford, New York.

From his early days in formation, Fr. Michael was eager to work in the missions, particularly in Japan. He was known for his quiet and cheerful manner, and he was always supportive and ready to serve the people entrusted to his care. With his health declining in recent years, he remained as active as he was able. He died at St. Peter's Hospital in Albany, New York, on March 24, 2022, at 70 years of age, in the 47th year of his profession and 41st year of priesthood. ☩



Alice
A wonderful priest and person. You will be missed
Father Stanley. 🙏



Gretchen
Father Stanley was such a kind & sweet person. I'll
always remember his kindness & loving homily he
provided during my dad's funeral Mass. ❤️🍀 Rest in
eternal peace Fr. Stanley



Lynda
He was a wonderful man and priest.
He is in the arms of Jesus and all
the Saints. He will be missed



Rich
Oh dear, our hearts hurt for Father Stanley we will miss
him alot





Foreign Missions

BY BR. ATSUSHI KUWAHARA, O.S.A.

Japan

*Br. Atsushi with Fr. Jesus Daño, O.S.A.
at the 2018 Provincial Chapter*



I joined the Order in December 2013. There are many reasons why I joined the Augustinians, but the biggest reason is that I was attracted by the kindness and meekness of Japanese Augustinians. As I spent most of my time with my large family, community life was also appealing to me. Unfortunately, I was the only candidate in Japan at the time, and even though we lived together, it was a small community of just two of us, including the Prior. The following year, in September 2014,

I was sent to the US, and started a new life with eight other candidates and three formators at Bellesini Friary in Villanova. I studied English at St. Joseph University with Fr. Elizandro

Contreras O.S.A.,

who was also a seminary student at the time. Next year,

we started the Novitiate program for a year in Racine, WI. Thankfully,

I made my first vows at Kasai Church in Tokyo in 2016. I

returned to the US to study theology and philosophy at CTU in Chicago





(l-r) Br. Atsushi, Fr. Jeremy Hiers, Fr. Joseph Narog, Fr. Daniel Madden, Fr. Elizandro Contreras

starting in 2016, (during which time I spent one pastoral year in Japan). I graduated from the Master of Arts in Pastoral Study course in May 2020, then, I returned to Japan. During my five years in the US, I was helped by many Augustinians. It was a five-year period supported by the love and friendship of Augustinians across the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova, the Province of the Midwest, and the Province of California.

Because of all the love and friendship I was given, I received the grace of solemn vows on May 5, 2022, at Kasai Church in Tokyo.

Br. Atsushi with his family during his Solemn Profession



(l-r) Br. Atsushi, Fr. Hirano Tetsuya and Prior General, Fr. Alejandro Moral Anton



Having taken the Solemn Vows, my next step is to become a generous giver of the grace given to me. As St. Augustine said, “God will give more to those who use it.” God will give more to those who use what they have received for others. (Christian Doctrine 1:1).

I want to live through this consecrated life so that I can give generously to others this great grace that I have received from God, from my family, from the Augustinians. ✠

BY MADONNA SUTTER
DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

Join the Movement



Madonna Sutter
Director of Advancement

Dear Friends of the Augustinians,

April 24, 2022 – Tolle Lege Day – was a beautiful sunny day, perfect for spending time outside. Tolle Lege Day had a slow start this year, but as late afternoon approached, things began to pick up. I suspect our Augustinian Friends were doing what most people do on Sunday – go to church, have a leisurely brunch, and spend time with family. And since the weather was so nice, people were late to check their email.

The slow start did NOT impact overall results. Over 1,000 donors contributed over \$400,000! On behalf of the friars, thank you to

those who gave so generously on Tolle Lege Day. Your kindness impacts directly our friars' lives and ministries. A special thank you to our 120 Tolle Lege Day Ambassadors! Your efforts made a difference and were key to our success. None of this would have been possible without your outreach.

People are always asking me, "How can I help you?" Aside from your love and prayers for the Augustinian friars, kindly consider serving as a Tolle Lege Day Ambassador. It's easy, does not take much time, and can make an enormous difference for the friars! Contact me if interested.

Blessings,

Director of Advancement
madonna.sutter@augustinian.org
267.272.3048

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a gift without writing a check:*

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Celebrating the Augustinian Legacy in the Merrimack Valley

BY SARAH REISERT
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT



*James Hickey, Ph.D. and
Fr. Arthur D. Johnson, O.S.A.*

The Province and Augustinian Friars at Merrimack College and St. Augustine Parish hosted a gathering in the Merrimack Valley on May 12, paying special tribute to the Augustinian legacy not only in the Merrimack Valley but specifically at Austin Preparatory School.

Over 120 friends of the Augustinians gathered for dinner and fellowship as Dr. James Hickey, Head of School at Austin Prep, was honored as a Profile in Augustinian Leadership. Dr. Hickey has been a teacher for more than 25 years, with experience working in independent, Catholic, public, boarding, and post-secondary schools. As Austin Preparatory school's 10th head of school, Dr. Hickey came to Austin Prep in July 2013 after serving as the Dean of Academic Affairs at The Pennington School in Pennington, New Jersey. He quickly advanced the school's strategic plan to completion and launched a new five-year strategic plan in 2019. Under his leadership, Austin Prep has experienced a capacity enrollment surge, innovation in academic offerings and student experiences outside the classroom, significant upgrades to its facilities and fields, and an increase in the number of teaching faculty.

"Sometimes in leadership, you don't always see the best of human nature, and I think it's easy to become jaded," Dr. Hickey said during his remarks. "But the Augustinian way – and the wisdom from the Rule of St. Augustine – inspires me to stay above the fray and approach the messiness with two assumptions: first, presume good intent, and two, if you let love prevail as the Rule says, then God is present."

Dr. Hickey also presented the Head of School's Medallion to Fr. Art Johnson, O.S.A. The Head of Austin Prep has the unique privilege and special honor to recognize members of the Austin Prep community who have exceeded expectations and achieved unparalleled results. The Head's Medallion is reserved for distinct occasions and rare moments to salute those who unquestionably exemplify Austin Prep's Augustinian values of veritas, unitas, and caritas. Fr. Art, currently serving as the Parochial Vicar of St. Augustine Parish in Andover, Massachusetts, and formerly as a trustee of Austin Prep, received the medallion in recognition of his status as one of the founding Augustinian Friars of Austin Prep, as well as his abiding presence at the school for 60 years. He was also presented with a shadowbox containing a piece of the original terrazzo floor from the school's dining room, with an inscription honoring him as a "pioneer, founder, and bedrock of Austin Preparatory School."



*(l-r) Richard Marino, Mary Marino
and Mary Wesson*

"When Jim asked me about coming this evening and receiving the medal, I was expecting an award, not a roast," said Fr. Art jovially upon receiving his recognition. "They say your first assignment as a priest, as a friar, is the most important one, and the one that stays with you. I never expected that my first assignment would last for 20 years – and then it continued for 40 more, which was a great privilege."

It was a pleasure to see so many of our Merrimack friends together again, and we look forward to visiting with you again soon! ☩



*(l-r) Fr. Carlos Urbina, O.S.A., Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D., Fr. John DelloRusso, O.S.A.,
Fr. Daniel Madden, O.S.A., Fr. Arthur Johnson, O.S.A., Fr. Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A., Fr. Bryan
Kerns, O.S.A., Fr. Edward Enright, O.S.A., Fr. Peter Gori, O.S.A., James Hickey, Ph.D.*



Upcoming Events:

Profile in Augustinian Leadership

Tuesday, September 27, 2022 • Overbrook Golf Club

6:00 - 8:30 PM | 799 Godfrey Road, Villanova

For more information, visit: AugustinianFund.org/overbrook

Contact: Madonna Sutter at madonna.sutter@augustinian.org
or 267.272.3048



The Augustinians are Coming to You!

Staten Island: November 2022

Florida: February 2023

Stay tuned for more
information: AugustinianFund.org/events

