

# THE AUGUSTINIAN

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The Order's headquarters in Rome, the Augustinian General Curia, is located just outside the Vatican, opposite the colonnade, along with the Order's International College of Saint Monica and the Patristic Institute, the *Augustinianum*.

P. 8 Mission: Buon Consiglio

From Rome, Augustinian Friars were sent to Philadelphia in the waning days of the 19th century, to minister to the growing numbers of Italian immigrants. That first mission, *Madonna del Buon Consiglio Parish*, saw that Italian immigrants were served and seeds were planted to assure the care continued.

P. 12 The National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia

The National Shrine of Saint Rita was founded by the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova, to honor Saint Rita of Cascia, an Italian Augustinian nun. Recently, the Shrine has been part of an overall renewal, which has bolstered the Augustinian presence in South Philadelphia.

P. 14 Blessed Stephen Bellesini, O.S.A.

An Augustinian Friar who had been expelled from his religious house in Trent, Italy, and forbidden to present himself as a religious, had a successful career as an educator in his city. Faithful to his vows, however, he returned to the Augustinians when recalled to Rome by his Prior General.

P. 16 Bryan Kerns: My Pastoral Year of Service

Brothers in formation serve their pastoral year at an Augustinian parish or ministry. Helping at a food pantry, leading Communion services, visiting seniors, and teaching at the parish school, Brother Bryan Kerns, O.S.A., tells what his pastoral year in formation is teaching him.



THE AUGUSTINIAN

A publication of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova.

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ON THE COVER:

The Chapel of Saint Monica, enshrines the tomb of the mother of Saint Augustine. It is one of sixteen chapels and altars at the Basilica of Saint Augustine, Rome. Photo courtesy of Kevin Salemme.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Thanks to John J. Sheridan, O.S.A., (Archivist), June Weiland, (Assistant Archivist) and Richard C. Ekman, O.S.A., of the Augustinian Provincial Archives of Saint Thomas of Villanova; Nicholas Martorano, O.S.A.; Kevin Salemme, who provided photos for the cover and the private chapel at Saint Monica's on page 4; Cardinal Prospero Grech, O.S.A., who took to the streets of Rome to capture the image on page 3 and the Augustinianum on page 6; to Joseph L. Farrell, O.S.A. and John R. Flynn, O.S.A. for their rooftop photo by Mr. Maurizio Misitano from the terrace of the Curia. Saint Rita National Shrine by C. Di Carlo.

BLESSED STEPHEN BELLESINI, O.S.A., 1774-1840

“We Augustinians recognize in the person of Stephen Bellesini a brother who personifies what is best in the vocation we share with him: a firm dedication to religious life combined with passion for service to others and the ability to adjust to limitations, without capitulating in the face of challenges.”

“Stephen found an opportunity to live his life faithful to his ideals, and in fruitful benefit to others, in the circumstances that life unexpectedly

presented to him. He did not hesitate to give up family, friends, reputation, position and even citizenship, to ‘meet his destiny’ with fellow religious in Rome.”

“Blessed Stephen Bellesini, O.S.A. models for friars, and for many other people, as well, what it means to live authentically and faithfully the life we have embraced.”

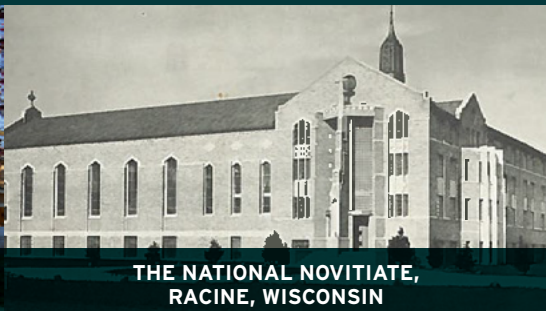
– Father Michael Di Gregorio, O.S.A., Prior Provincial of the Augustinian Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova

Upon going through a 2-step process of vocation discernment, men continue the formal journey to become an Augustinian:



THE STEPHEN BELLESINI FRIARY, ARDMORE, PENNSYLVANIA

Men from East Coast and Midwest Provinces live and study together with yearlong theological studies at Villanova University.



THE NATIONAL NOVITIATE, RACINE, WISCONSIN

Men from all North American Provinces spend a year in study, prayer and contemplation rooted in the joy of the Gospel, finding joy in their inner self within community life. If desired, the year culminates with a man's first profession.



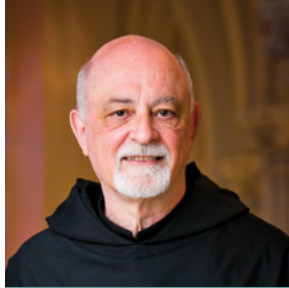
SAINT AUGUSTINE FRIARY AND NATIONAL THEOLOGATE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Professed Brothers from all provinces begin studies at The Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Illinois. This includes a pastoral year of service within an established community, providing practical experience in an Augustinian Ministry.

If you have a desire to be an Augustinian and wish to discern your “call” contact one of our regional Vocation Directors at [www.augustinianvocations.org/contact/](http://www.augustinianvocations.org/contact/)

To find out more about Blessed Stephen Bellesini, O.S.A., see the article on page 14.





## LETTER FROM THE

# PRIOR PROVINCIAL

Dear Friends,

As many of you will be receiving this issue of *The Augustinian* during the Easter Season, I want to greet you with rich blessings of peace and hope that are rooted in the great event of Jesus' victory over sin and death. I do so on behalf of all of my brothers of the Province as well as in my own name! As we see around us many signs of rebirth in nature and feel ourselves enlivened by extended length of sunlit days, we are invited to recognize all the more the life and light that the dying and rising of Jesus have gained for us. We are empowered by the abundance of grace to walk the journey of faith with renewed confidence and joy.

I am happy to share with you the good news of two singular events that mark this period of the present year in a special way. You will read more about one of these in the pages of this issue. This is the official opening of the diocesan process for the beatification and canonization of our Augustinian brother, Father Bill Atkinson. His name is not new to the readers of *The Augustinian*, but the ceremonies celebrated at the Villanova Church on April 24th do mark a new and important stage of development in his Cause. I hope you will find the material we have included in this issue helpful in understanding a bit more the process we are undertaking.

The second event of significance is not covered in this issue due to restraints of time and publication deadlines. I speak here of the presentation of the very first Saint Augustine Medal, offered by the Augustinian Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova to Patty and Jay Wright, in recognition of their dedication to the Province and to Augustinian values in their personal and professional lives. We are most grateful to Patty and Jay for their witness to the values of Unity, Truth and Charity, especially among the young. We are similarly grateful to the many friends and benefactors of the friars who have joined us by honoring the Wrights and supporting the Province.

In the following pages, you will be introduced also to other witnesses to Augustinian life and ministries as we share with you the stories of people, places and events, past and present, that make up the great mosaic that is the Augustinian Family.

God's blessings on you,

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

VOLUME XII . ISSUE II

## THE AUGUSTINIAN

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20nine  
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Italian connection

# THE GENERAL CURIA

THE BASILICA OF SAINT AUGUSTINE AND TO ITS RIGHT, THE FRIARY OF SAINT AUGUSTINE THAT HOUSES FRIARS WHO SERVE AT THE BASILICA.

BY FATHER MICHAEL DI GREGORIO, O.S.A.

## THE BASILICA AND FRIARY OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

**Not far from one of the most popular and frequented sites in the city of Rome, The Piazza Navona, stands the Basilica of Saint Augustine, which houses, among other historic treasures, the tomb of Saint Monica and the popular Roman devotion to Our Lady of Childbirth. It is also home to works of art by such renowned figures as Caravaggio, Sansovino, Raffaello, il Guercino and others, and is counted among one of the most beautiful and imposing churches in the eternal city.**

The basilica's beginning dates to the last years of the 13th century, some 50 or so years after the founding of the Augustinian Order, whose friars had been entrusted with the care of a small ancient church dedicated to Saint Tryphon, and who built, adjacent to the church, a small friary. The street on which the basilica was eventually built faced onto one of the main access

routes to Saint Peter's Basilica, and so it became a popular wayside destination for pilgrims to Rome. Several times over the centuries the new Basilica of Saint Augustine was enlarged and restored, as was the friary, a section of which was devoted to housing a vast and important library, the *Biblioteca Angelica*, which in the 16th century was the first public library in

all of Europe. The friary itself came to be, in time, the seat of the Augustinian Prior General together with the friars who assisted him in the government of the Order, known as his curia. Additionally, it was the home of those friars who administered the basilica, as well a sizable group of Augustinian professors and students.





In April 1871, the routine life and work of the friars was severely interrupted as the Basilica of Saint Augustine, the friary and the library, were confiscated by the state, during a period of rigorous harassment and repression of the Church and religious communities in many countries. The friars were dispersed, leaving only a number to carry on the services of the basilica, as well as those confined in the infirmary and some lay brothers. The Prior General and his curia moved for a time to the friary of the Irish Augustinians at Santa Maria in Posterula, which was under British protection. They returned to Saint Augustine's after some alterations were made to accommodate them in a very limited section of the expansive building.

In order to find a more permanent living solution to these regrettable circumstances, in 1882 Father Pacifico Neno, O.S.A., Commissary General of the Order, succeeded in purchasing the former renaissance villa of the Cesi family adjacent to Saint Peter's Square. The villa had once belonged to a group of Armenian monks who, dissatisfied with the proceedings of the First Vatican Council which ended in 1870, sold it and left Rome. The Augustinians were able to obtain donations from the North American and Chilean Provinces, as well as from Maria Anna of Savoy, wife of Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria, in order to buy it from its new owners.

## SAINT MONICA COLLEGE

The initial community of 40 friars moved on to the property on November 6, 1882. The community's membership resembled that of Saint Augustine's in housing the Prior General, his curia, and an international college of Italian, Maltese, Irish and North American student friars and their Augustinian professors. Nine years later, the college now named for Saint Monica, was enlarged with the addition of a new wing. By 1906 it was able to accommodate 50 students from the Augustinian world, in addition to the members of the curia, professors and lay brothers.

At various moments over the course of its life, Saint Monica's has experienced highs and lows in its role as an international house of studies of the Order. This has been due largely to limitations imposed by the two World Wars and the severe challenges



**Donor Maria Anna of Savoy, Empress Consort of Austria**  
(Italian: *Maria Anna Ricciarda Carolina Margherita Pia*) was the wife of Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria. Painting is by Johann Nepomuk Ender.



that followed from them. For a period of time, Saint Monica became one of the many religious houses in Rome that sheltered Jewish families who were at great risk of deportation to concentration camps. Today, a large marble plaque within the friary commemorates the hiding of these Jewish victims.

Today, the Augustinian community of Saint Monica comprises 41 friars from 19 countries and 19 different provinces or vicariates of the Order. Twenty-four members of the community are students doing theological studies in preparation for ministry or pursuing advanced degrees in one of the many specialized schools of Rome. While many American friars over the years have been students, professors

or officials of the community, only two Americans are presently there, the former president of the Patristic Institute, Father Robert Dodaro, O.S.A., and a student, Brother Nicholas Porter, O.S.A.

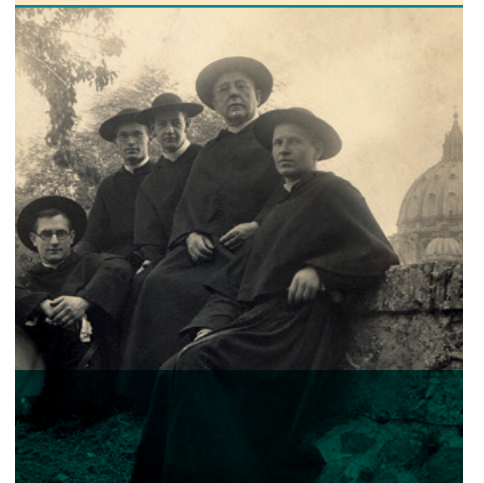
While the focus of life for the Saint Monica community is very much centered on academics, a specific ministry of the community is service in the public chapel of Saint Monica, which opens out onto a major pedestrian walkway leading to Saint Peter's Square. Here the friars offer several Masses on weekdays and Sundays, are available for the sacrament of reconciliation and other para-liturgical ceremonies according to the seasons of the year.

## THE GENERAL CURIA

During the term of office of the second North American Prior General, Father Joseph Hickey, O.S.A., the decision was made to separate the living and office space of the curia from that of the college. In the autumn of 1952, construction of a new friary began adjacent to the college, and in the spring of 1955 the Prior General and his assistants and staff were able to occupy the new building. Presently fourteen friars

compose this community, including the Prior General, his six Assistants General, and other officials of the Order such as treasurer, archivist, postulator of causes, etc. Some members of this community have also carried out ministries attached to the Holy See, such as pastor of Saint

**OSA Friars in Rome in the 1920s:** (L-R) Ryan, DeMarco, McCall, Charles Mary Driscoll (Assistant-General of the Order from 1920-1925) and Augustinian Servant of God, John McKniff.







VIEW OF ST. PETER'S BASILICA FROM SAINT MONICA COLLEGE, PHOTO CIRCA 1934-1939.

Peter's Basilica, or staff member of the Secretariat of State of Vatican City. The curia community also is frequently a house of hospitality for bishops and cardinals visiting Rome, as well as Augustinian provincials from around the world. Two members of the Villanova Province who are presently members of this community are Fathers Joseph Farrell, O.S.A., who serves as the Order's Vicar General, and John Flynn, O.S.A., who is Secretary General.

## THE AUGUSTINIANUM

The third structure which today stands on this same campus with Saint Monica's College and the Augustinian Curia, is the Augustinian Patristic Institute or *Augustinianum* which was established on February 14, 1969, and inaugurated on May 4, 1970, feast day of Saint Monica, with the personal participation of Pope Paul VI. This institute, affiliated with the Pontifical Lateran University, is dedicated to cultivating the sacred sciences, especially the thought of the Fathers of the Church, including, of course, Saint Augustine and his legacy. A friar has been president of the institute since its founding and others, specialists in the Fathers of the Church, have been members of the faculty. North Americans who have taught there with great distinction are such friars as Fathers Robert Russell, O.S.A., Russell De Simone, O.S.A., George Lawless, O.S.A., and Allan Fitzgerald, O.S.A.



**Our Friars at the Curia:** (L-R) Fathers John R. Flynn, O.S.A., Secretary General and Joseph L. Farrell, O.S.A., Vicar General of the Order. The Curia exercises authority in service to the Order for members in 50 different countries.



THE AUGUSTINIANUM



## PACIFICO NENO O.S.A., PRIOR PROVINCIAL AND PRIOR GENERAL

*The Augustinian Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova was only four years old when, in 1878, Father Pacifico Neno, an expatriate Italian friar stationed at Villanova College, was elected the Province's second Prior Provincial.*

Father Neno had come to the United States and to Villanova College at the age of 32, in 1865, in response to the urgent request put to the Prior General by the American Augustinians for qualified professors of theology to help prepare young friars in their studies for the priesthood. Father Neno was soon named prefect of studies and professor of dogma, moral theology, canon law and church history. Four years later he became Master of Novices.

Father Thomas Middleton, O.S.A., a chronicler of Province history and fellow member of the Villanova Monastery during Father Neno's years in the United



IN 1867, A WEEKEND SPIRITUAL RETREAT, THE FIRST OF ITS KIND, WAS HELD AT VILLANOVA FOR THE ENTIRE AMERICAN AUGUSTINIAN MISSION. A NUMBER OF THE 44 AUGUSTINIANS IN THE UNITED STATES WERE ABLE TO ATTEND, AND THEY POSED FOR THIS PHOTOGRAPH. IT WAS TAKEN IN FRONT OF THE ORIGINAL RUDOLPH MANSION AT BEL AIR. FATHER PACIFICO NENO, O.S.A., IS PICTURED IN THE SECOND ROW, 3RD FROM THE LEFT.

States, described his confrere in the following way: "gentle, sociable, kind; loved study, clear-headed; rather stout, medium sized, straight in his bearing, dark black eyes and hair."

Antonio Pacifico Neno was born in the village of Grotte di Castro, some 60 miles north of Rome in the Province of Viterbo. After he had made the decision in his teen years to enter the diocesan seminary, he happened upon a vocation flyer for the Augustinians, and changed his direction. He entered the novitiate in 1850 at the Shrine of Our Mother of Good Counsel in Genazzano, made his profession of vows the following year, and began studies for the priesthood at the Augustinian General House attached to Saint Augustine Basilica, Rome. He was ordained to the priesthood on February 16, 1856, after which he taught at Recanati, and then in Rome, where he also was appointed regent of studies.

The Augustinians had been present in the United States since 1796, but it was not until 1874 that they were formed into an independent Province. The first Provincial Chapter was held in December of that year, and elected as first Prior Provincial Father Thomas Galberry, O.S.A., who served a brief two years before he was appointed Bishop of Hartford, Connecticut. In the next Provincial Chapter of 1878, Father Neno was elected. Even as leader of the Province he continued teaching at the college, and when he asked to resign as Provincial two years later in order to devote his energies exclusively to academia, the friars of the

Province protested to the Order's superior in Rome, so much did they value Father Neno and his work. The Prior General, acceding to the wishes of the membership, directed that he continue on, but this was not to be for long. Ten months later, Pope Leo XIII, recognizing the Order's need for strong leadership in order to remedy the considerable losses the Augustinians had suffered with government suppression of religious houses in many parts of Europe, named Father Neno Commissary General of the Order and called him to Rome.

After 16 years of service to the American Province, Pacifico Neno left the States in January 1881 to take up his new responsibilities alongside the Prior General, and immediately enacted measures to draw new vocations to the Order and to re-establish full common life. Eventually, at the death of the sitting Prior General in 1887, Father Neno was named to this office.

On the morning of February 24, 1889, while meeting with Bishop Luigi Sepiacci, O.S.A., he was stricken with apoplexy and died several hours later, at the age of 56. His death was a loss of great magnitude for the Order, which was just beginning once again to move forward with enthusiasm and hope, thanks largely to Father Neno's inspiration and leadership. It was a blow also, in a very special way, to his confreres back in the United States.

Father Neno was the first North American to become Prior General of the Augustinian Order, having become a naturalized United States citizen on October 11, 1870.



# THE BIRTH OF THE *Italian Augustinian Mission: Buon Consiglio to South Philadelphia*



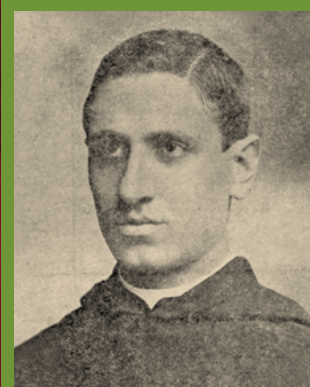
**ARCHBISHOP  
S. MARTINELLI, O.S.A.**  
PRIOR GENERAL &  
APOSTOLIC DELEGATE



**ARCHBISHOP  
PATRICK J. RYAN**  
ARCHBISHOP OF  
PHILADELPHIA



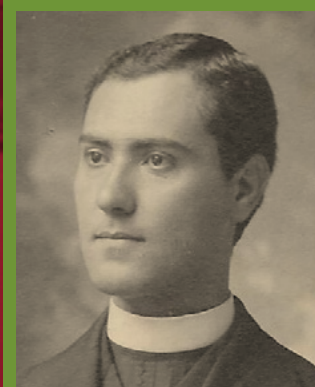
**FATHER GUGLIELMO  
REPETTI, O.S.A.**  
FIRST PASTOR OF  
THE CHURCH



**FATHER ANGELO  
CARUSO, O.S.A.**  
FIRST PRIOR OF  
THE FRIARY



**BROTHER BERNARDINO  
FALCONI, O.S.A.**  
CARED FOR  
CHURCH & FRIARY



**FATHER AGOSTINO  
COGLIANI, O.S.A.**  
PARISH  
PRIEST

BY FATHER MICHAEL DI GREGORIO, O.S.A.



MADRE DEL BUON CONSIGLIO

Among the several hundred passengers aboard the steamship “Werra,” which docked at New York on the morning of December 30, 1897, were three eager pioneers who were making their first trip to the “new world.” They had departed from the port of Genoa, Italy, twelve days earlier, spent Christmas Day on the sea, and were met, upon disembarking, by two companions who would escort them to their intended destination, the Villanova monastery, for a few days of rest and orientation, and then to South Philadelphia where they would set up home and begin

their work. The three were Augustinian Friars: Father Guglielmo Repetti, Father Angelo Caruso, and Brother Bernardino Falconi. They had come with a mandate and with little more: to care for the great wave of southern Italians that had been settling recently in the city of brotherly love. Meeting them at the dock in New York were two friars from Villanova: Father Charles Driscoll, O.S.A., provincial of the American Augustinian Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova, and Father Nazzareno Casacca, O.S.A., a native of the central Italian city of Viterbo. Father Casacca had come to the United States two years earlier, and was a professor now at the college. The band of three had sailed at the direction of Archbishop Sebastiano Martinelli, Prior General of the Order, and the Vatican’s Apostolic Delegate in the United States. Martinelli was responding to the urgent request that had been made by Patrick Ryan, the Archbishop of Philadelphia, for priests to serve the rapidly growing Italian immigrant population of Philadelphia. Archbishop Ryan had tried unsuccessfully to find a religious community of priests to assume care of the Italians. After Martinelli was named Apostolic Delegate in 1896, Ryan appealed to him—with happy results.

Father Angelo, prior of the group, was a 27-year-old native of Altavilla Irpina, near Avellino. He had joined the Augustinians while quite young, and professed vows in 1886. He was ordained to the priesthood in

1892. It was precisely the 5th anniversary day of his ordination, December 18th, when he boarded ship with his two companions to set off for Philadelphia—a providential sign for him, no doubt! The second member of the group was Father Guglielmo Serafino Repetti, 25 years old, from the northern Italian Province of Alessandria and the village of Cabella Ligure, where he had been born on the feast day of the Madonna, August 15, 1872. At three years of age his father had died, and at thirteen he began his early formation with the Augustinians. Never

## *Madonna del Buon Consiglio*



OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL CHURCH,  
SCHOOL AND FRIARY

of very robust health, Repetti nonetheless completed his education and was ordained in 1895. After brief assignments in Italy, he was called to become pastor of the new and challenging mission in Philadelphia. The third and senior member of the group was Bernardino Falconi, a lay brother from the celebrated city of Florence, born in 1861. He joined the Augustinians at the age of 22 and made his profession of vows in 1893. In this new Italian-American initiative, Brother Bernardino would fulfill the role of caretaker of friary and church, and as cook and sacristan for his confreres.

## *Buon Consiglio Altare*



OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL ALTAR

The choice of these friars to come together from distinct geographic regions and different Italian provinces of the Order, may have been occasioned as much by a lack of suitable personnel from any one Augustinian province, as by a desire to underscore this new, bold initiative as being a project of the Italian Augustinians as a whole rather than of a specific regional group as was more commonly the case. This mixed “ethnicity” of friars would also match the not insignificant diversity of thousands of Italians arriving in Philadelphia from many different towns and villages, all with their distinct dialects and customs. This was, no doubt, a great advantage in their work.

The initiative was indeed ‘bold’ for several reasons, the greatest being that the Order at the time was only just beginning to experience a slight reprise following the decimation of religious communities of both men and women in many countries of Europe. In 1880, less than two decades before the Italian Mission to Philadelphia had begun, the Order had been in great danger of dying out. The spirit of revolution which had wiped out entirely the Augustinians in France, had entered Italy as elsewhere on the continent, closing the 400 Augustinian friaries in that country alone. The 18,000 Augustinians world-wide at the start of the French Revolution would be reduced to 1,800 by the end of the 19th century. By an interesting coincidence, it was the Provincial of the Villanova

Province—Italian-born Father Pacifico Neno, O.S.A.,—who was to play the decisive role in the Order’s recovery when he was summoned back to Italy by Pope Leo XIII to assume the direction of the Order in 1881. Unfortunately, Father Neno was to have only a brief opportunity to turn things around before his untimely death at the age of 56, but it was long enough to engender a new spirit and set a new direction for the Augustinians.

The focus of attention for the three new arrivals was to be the Italian residents of Philadelphia, living anywhere west of 8th Street; the base of their activity would be an old school building which they had purchased and would re-fit to house their own living quarters, meeting space, a church to seat 700 people, and 12 classrooms of a school—all under one roof. They purchased the building for \$25,000, and within a year’s time had renovated it for use. When, finally in May 1899, the church, named *Madonna del Buon Consiglio*—Our Lady of Good Counsel—and the future school with the same title, were blessed by the two Archbishops, Ryan and Martinelli, an immense crowd of 10,000 people filled the streets, testament to the immigrants’ gratitude for the work the friars had already achieved, and enthusiasm for the hope it engendered for the future.

The throng that gathered on this spring day in the closing year of the 19th century gave evidence of things to come: of challenges and opportunities, of promise





OUR LADY OF POMPEII, DOBBS FERRY, NEW YORK



ST. MARY'S, EAST VINELAND, NEW JERSEY



OUR LADY OF POMPEII, EAST VINELAND, NEW JERSEY



ST. AUGUSTINE PREP SCHOOL, RICHLAND, NEW JERSEY



ST. NICHOLAS OF TOLENTINE,  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

and great concern. Estimates of the total number of Italians present in Philadelphia at the time was 46,000—most of them now the responsibility of Fathers Caruso and Repetti. The challenge for the friars would come, not from persecution or the political entanglements of Church and civil authority, as in other mission lands, but from the more subtle and often underestimated trials of illiteracy, anti-clericalism, poverty and indifference, often on the part of the people themselves, and discrimination, intolerance and resentment from others who should have been their allies. The great threats to success here were not the menaces of disease and the harsh forces of nature, or the dangers of oppression and intimidation, but rather of ignorance and neglect. Yet the missionary spirit that motivated the friars to leave home and embark on this uncertain venture would not allow them to see challenges as signs of impending doom and certain defeat. It cannot be overstated just how significant the day of the dedication was for the entire community! In Our Lady of Good Counsel, the people had a tangible symbol of their status and legitimacy in their new country. Their church would serve not only as the spiritual, educational and social center of the immigrant population, but also bring together in a single community individuals who did not necessarily view themselves yet as one united people. The sense of pride and achievement experienced in having a church of their own kept them fiercely loyal to the

Augustinians and to Our Lady of Good Counsel through succeeding decades, and helps explain the intense, hostile reaction of the people to a future Archbishop's decision to close the parish in 1933!

Contentment, pride and accomplishment were greatly challenged soon after that jubilant spring day, however, when adversity struck the community with a mighty blow, as Father Repetti took to bed with fever. After several weeks he was rushed to Jefferson Hospital where he died on August 2nd, still shy of his 27th birthday. The voice of an eloquent preacher and energetic leader was silenced. His funeral was offered in the still unfinished church. Great crowds of people filled the all too limited space inside and out, some climbing the scaffolding erected to complete the building's interior, to catch a glimpse of the poignant scene that caused even the preacher to pause as he spoke, overcome with emotion. He recalled the words that had been spoken by the young friar's mother a little less than two years earlier, as he tearfully bid her farewell before departing for Philadelphia, "You're going to America," she said, "you're not going to your death."

Despite this distressing turn of events, Father Caruso, Brother Bernardino, and the entire community forged ahead. Fortunately, already assigned to the mission a week before Father Repetti's death, and on his way now to Philadelphia, was another friar, Father Agostino Cogliani, O.S.A., 26 years old, also from Avellino, ordained just four months. He would be a much-needed helper to the new pastor, Father Caruso. Young and enthusiastic, Father Cogliani arrived in September, Archbishop Ryan blessed the new church in November, and by then Father Caruso was planning the next important initiative of the Mission: a parish school.

Father Caruso engaged a community of Missionary Franciscan Sisters and opened the doors of the school to 320 children in September 1901. Soon after, he wrote to Augustinian officials in Rome, requesting permission to purchase a barn and five houses to accommodate additional students. Enrollment soon reached 1,000 pupils. In 1906, the number grew to 1,200, and additional applicants had to be turned away due to lack of space. Good Counsel School was not, however, without controversy. Father Caruso believed firmly

that students should be taught Italian as well as English, and so he required teachers who were fluent in both languages. This program met with opposition from the diocesan office of Catholic education, as did the decision to teach both Italian and American history. But Father Caruso was far ahead of his time and, despite opposition, he prevailed, for his position was not unique among Italian priests and religious who saw themselves as the guardians of Italian culture, and who, generally, placed great stress on teaching the Italian language and history in their schools. Good Counsel School also provided opportunities for adults to learn English, to find employment and to enjoy other activities of a social, religious and civic nature.

After a little more than five years of intense work, Father Cogliani was taken ill and was rushed to the hospital where he was operated on for appendicitis. He collapsed following the operation and passed away on November 4, 1904, at the age of 30. Once again the community fell into mourning. Following the Requiem Mass, Father Cogliani's body was placed in the vault at Old St. Augustine's Church, just as Father Repetti's had been several years earlier, but later both bodies were

transferred to a new vault in front of Good Counsel Church. Fortunately for the continuation of the Mission, other friars had arrived from Italy in the course of those early years as the work increased. In the January 12, 1907 issue of the parish newspaper, the number of friars listed at the parish was seven: five priests and two brothers, and 23 religious sisters. The parochial school enrollment was 1,338 students; baptisms numbered 1,873, with 403 weddings and 679 funerals. As time passed, many of the families at Good Counsel began moving farther south in the city due to the extremely crowded conditions, with a resulting drop in church attendance. To address the situation, the friars opened a second church at 9th and Watkins Streets, named for Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, to serve as a chapel for the Italians who were now living in that area.

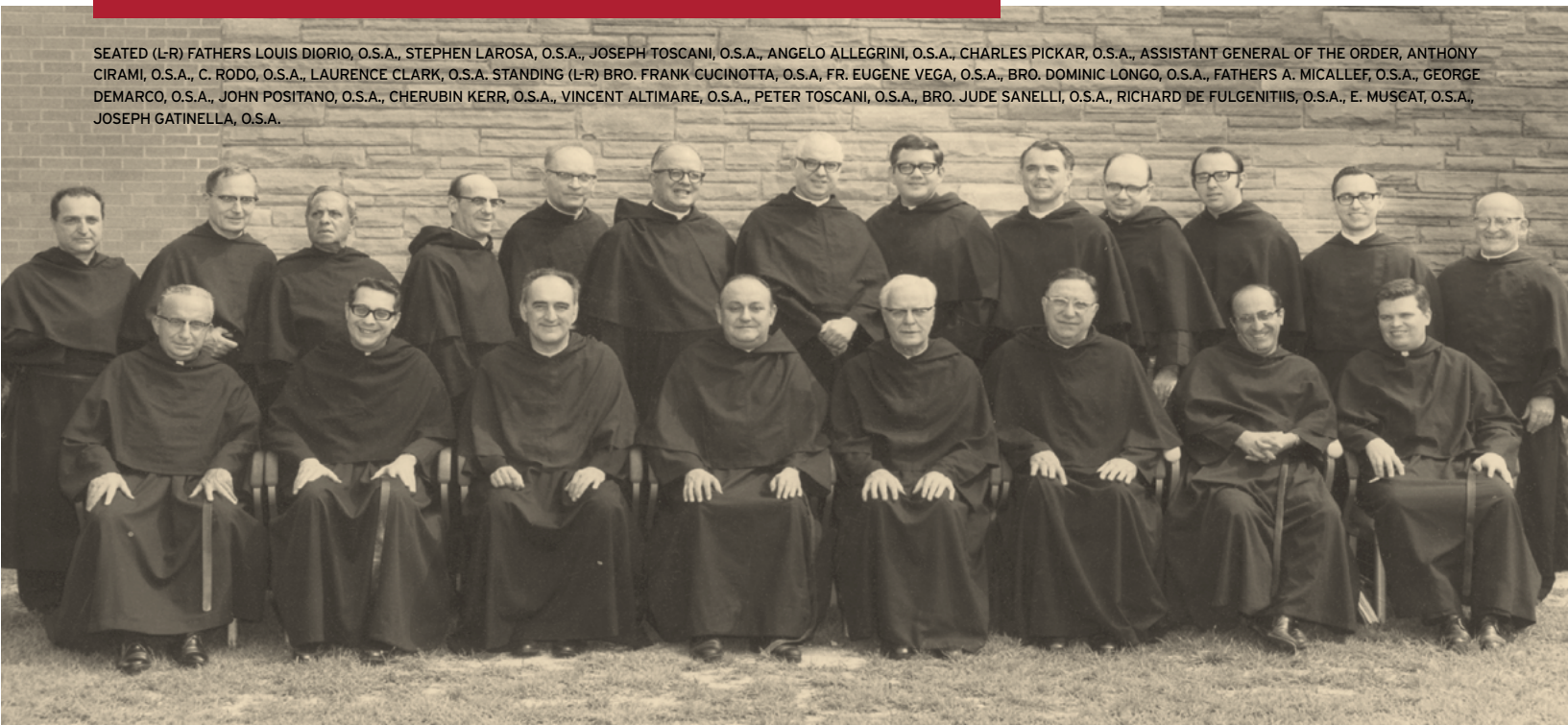
In mid-April 1911, it was time for Father Caruso to return to Italy. In the span of thirteen years good seeds had been sown, and signs of growth sprang up. The mandate given to the three pioneer missionaries in 1897 had been to care for the great wave of Italian immigrants to Philadelphia. Two decades later, recalling the investment which he personally, and the Order in Italy, had made to the

immigrants, to the Church and to society in America in general, Father Caruso asked, "What did the Italian Augustinians do?" They awakened the faith in their fellow countrymen; they founded for them schools, nurseries for children, societies, newspapers, a printing house, musical bands, choirs, and more. They started all these things in order to call them back to God."

From our vantage point, all these years later, we can say a bit more, for we know that from the sowing which the three friars did in 1898, five other shoots would spring forth—Saint Nicholas of Tolentine Parish in Philadelphia; Our Lady of Pompeii in Dobbs Ferry, New York; Our Lady of Pompeii and Saint Mary, both in East Vineland and Saint Augustine in Richland—all three in New Jersey, four parishes in all and a Prep School. The Mission eventually was constituted in 1925 as the Italian Vice-Province of Philadelphia, later renamed, appropriately, Good Counsel Vice-Province. It remained in existence until 1995 when it was dissolved, due principally to a lack of vocations. Yet all five of the branches that sprouted from the roots planted by the three friars continue still today. Ironically, the only foundation which no longer exists is the first one—Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish.

## *JUNE 15, 1970 THE FIRST DEFINITIVE CHAPTER OF THE GOOD COUNSEL VICE PROVINCE, 25 YEARS BEFORE ITS EVENTUAL DISSOLUTION.*

SEATED (L-R) FATHERS LOUIS DIORIO, O.S.A., STEPHEN LAROSA, O.S.A., JOSEPH TOSCANI, O.S.A., ANGELO ALLEGRI, O.S.A., CHARLES PICKAR, O.S.A., ASSISTANT GENERAL OF THE ORDER, ANTHONY CIRAMI, O.S.A., C. RODO, O.S.A., LAURENCE CLARK, O.S.A. STANDING (L-R) BRO. FRANK CUCINOTTA, O.S.A., FR. EUGENE VEGA, O.S.A., BRO. DOMINIC LONGO, O.S.A., FATHERS A. MICALLEF, O.S.A., GEORGE DEMARCO, O.S.A., JOHN POSITANO, O.S.A., CHERUBIN KERR, O.S.A., VINCENT ALTIMARE, O.S.A., PETER TOSCANI, O.S.A., BRO. JUDE SANELLI, O.S.A., RICHARD DE FULGENITIIS, O.S.A., E. MUSCAT, O.S.A., JOSEPH GATINELLA, O.S.A.





# A RENEWED PROVINCE MINISTRY AT THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF SAINT RITA

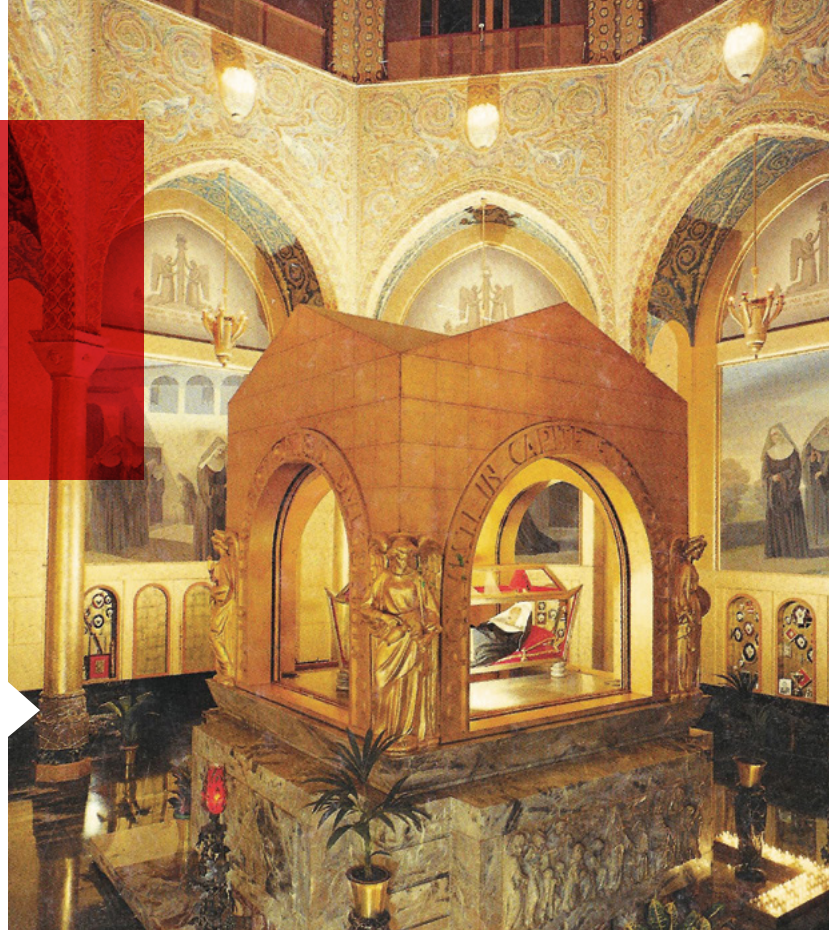
BY FATHER MICHAEL DI GREGORIO, O.S.A.



THE BASILICA DI SANTA RITA,  
CASCIA ITALY



THE TOWN OF CASCIA WAS THE HOME OF SAINT RITA OF CASCIA, AN AUGUSTINIAN NUN, WHO WAS BORN IN 1381 AND DIED IN 1457. HER BODY WAS NEVER BURIED BECAUSE OF THE STRONG DEVOTION THAT BEGAN IMMEDIATELY AFTER HER DEATH. AFTER HER CANONIZATION IN 1900, A LARGE SHRINE WAS BUILT IN CASCIA, WHERE HER BODY IS VENERATED. THE SHRINE IN PHILADELPHIA ECHOES THE MESSAGE OF SAINT RITA AS THE “PEACEMAKER” THROUGH OUTREACH TO ALL FAITHS IN THE COMMUNITY. RITA IS KNOWN AS THE SAINT OF THE IMPOSSIBLE AND MANY TESTIMONIES OF GRACES AND FAVORS RECEIVED COME TO THE SHRINES IN CASCIA AND PHILADELPHIA EACH YEAR.



THE BODY OF SAINT RITA ENSHRINED AT CASCIA, ITALY

PHILADELPHIA, PA



THE CASCIA CENTER AND SAINT RITA PLACE IS SET TO BE A COMBINED-USE BUILDING WITH OUTREACH MINISTRIES OF THE SHRINE AND LOW-INCOME HOUSING FOR SENIORS.

In the summer of 2016, the Augustinian Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova entered into an agreement with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia regarding the Province’s presence and ministry in the parishes we were then administering in South Philadelphia. There were two Augustinian parishes affected by this agreement. First, Saint Rita of Cascia, established in 1907 by the Villanova Province to care for a mixed community of Italians and other Latin Rite Catholics living within its boundaries. The second parish was Saint Nicholas of Tolentine, begun in 1912 as a mission chapel of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish on Christian Street. Both the parish and mission chapel had been founded and served by friars of the Order who had come from Italy specifically to minister to Italian immigrants. Saint Nicholas of Tolentine became a parish in 1933 when Our Lady of Good Counsel was closed by the Archdiocese. The 2016 arrangement would see the Parish of Saint Rita merge with Annunciation B.V.M. Parish, leaving Saint Rita to operate as a National Shrine without parish boundaries. In turn, the parishes of Annunciation and Saint Nicholas of Tolentine entered into

a partnership, whereby the Augustinians assumed responsibility for Annunciation and one pastor was appointed to serve both parishes with other friars to assist him. The parishes themselves, however, would remain independent. Saint Nicholas’ pastor, Father Nicholas Martorano, O.S.A., was officially installed also as pastor of Annunciation Parish on October 23, 2016. With the change in status of Saint Rita of Cascia from a parish to a shrine church, the Provincial Council has been considering ways in which the ministry at Saint Rita can develop in a way that is most consistent with its new character and mission of serving devotees of our patroness, while taking into consideration province personnel resources and our province goal of collaborating more fully in ministry with lay men and women. Accordingly,



CHESLEY TURNER

the Council has approved the appointment of a lay director of Saint Rita Shrine in the person of Miss Chesley Turner. Chesley will take the place of Father

Joseph Genito, O.S.A., as director who, following ten years of dedicated service to the Shrine, will receive a new assignment. Chesley will begin her ministry at Saint Rita on June 19, 2017. Her principal role will be to promote the Shrine and its ministries to a national audience and her responsibilities will include oversight of fundraising, management of staff, volunteers and finances. Chesley comes well qualified for the position and very familiar with the Augustinians, our charism and mission. She is a graduate of Villanova University, an alumna of the Augustinian Volunteer Program, and a collaborator for the past six years in ministry at Saint Augustine Parish, Philadelphia. Her professional skills and employment history include work in communications, creative development, project management, marketing, and significant experience in social media. All of this, combined with her deep commitment to, and enthusiasm for, lay ministry in the Church, recommend her highly for the position she will exercise. In her new role, she will collaborate closely with the team of friars who will continue to provide sacramental and hospitality ministry at the Shrine. The combined

service of friars dedicated to ministry at Saint Rita, working hand in hand with a director professionally and spiritually qualified to undertake the administrative responsibilities of the Shrine’s activities, augurs very well for the future of the Province’s commitment to the many people who are associated with the Shrine. As a ministry which is directly and totally under the purview of the Province, the director will be a member of the Province staff. At the same time that this renewed approach to our presence and ministry at Saint Rita is taking place, the Province continues to move forward in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia’s Catholic Health Care Services in constructing a combined-use building adjacent to the Shrine to serve as “Saint Rita Place,” a 46-unit residence of low-income housing for seniors, and “The Cascia Center” for outreach ministries associated with the Shrine, such as counseling and reconciliation services, and a gathering space for pilgrims and social events. We are continuing to raise necessary funds in order to make this important and desired feature of Province presence and ministry in South Philadelphia a reality.



# BLESSED STEPHEN BELLESINI, O.S.A.

BY FATHER MICHAEL DI GREGORIO, O.S.A.

IN 1839 THE PLAGUE REACHED GENNAZZANO AND FATHER STEPHEN DEVOTED HIMSELF TO THE SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL CARE OF ITS VICTIMS.

Precisely two-hundred years ago, on September 24, 1817, in the city of Trent, Italy, a 43-year-old, successful and popular teacher and inspector of public schools, rose from the table at the end of the evening meal, bade his brother, sister-in-law and their children good-bye, and left, it was supposed, for a much-needed vacation. Some days later, however, a letter arrived from Bologna with shocking news, “Don’t be surprised if I tell you that I have left Trent never to return. The reason for this decision of mine was the decree of the authorities not to re-open ever the friary of San Marco. How great a desire burned in my heart to clothe myself again in my holy habit. God finally heard my prayers and allowed me to be called by my General to Rome, there to meet my destiny. All of the difficulties which presented themselves on undertaking this journey were by divine

arrangement resolved, placing the most favorable means possible at my disposal to achieve my purpose.” As you can construe from this, the author was a religious. In fact, he was an Augustinian Friar by the name of Stephen Bellesini, who years earlier had been expelled from his home along with the 15 other members of his community, by order of the Bavarian government. This was a period of great devastation for the Church, and particularly for religious communities which were viewed by various political regimes to be an unnecessary burden on society. Houses of monks and nuns and friars were suppressed in various European countries, their members dispersed, and their buildings confiscated and converted to secular use. The members of the Augustinian friary of San Marco were forced out, forbidden to present themselves any longer as religious,

and made to fend for themselves. Some who were priests, were able to find bishops willing to accept them as diocesan clergy; others, especially the brothers and the oldest among them (Father Augustine Schreck at 80, for example) had to depend on the charity of relatives or friends, or find new secular means of employment. Father Stephen Bellesini was fortunate to find a welcome reception by his younger brother in the old family home where they had both grown up. While he resigned himself to the unavoidable restrictions placed upon him as a religious, he would not abandon altogether his ministry, and so sought a way, even in difficult circumstances, to spend his life in service of others, and in fidelity to the one to whom he had committed his life. How could he, as a man of faith and of the Church, be most influential in a society where faith and Church were being

increasingly undermined? How could he best use his personal gifts and experience to counterbalance the severe limitations being placed upon the community of believers? It did not take long for him to settle upon a path forward.

The streets of Trent were filled with young people whom society had neglected. Too poor to enjoy the “privilege” of education that was the reserve of the more fortunate, they sought work or mischief to fill their day. Stephen found his purpose in them and their plight: give them the means to a better life while opening their minds and hearts, as well, to values that could redirect the course of an increasingly secularized society. His brother’s home became a free school for the poor. Stephen personally went into the streets to gather them in. Those who were hungry were fed, those who were in need of shoes or warm clothing found them there. All were instructed. Soon the numbers he welcomed exceeded the limits of the house, and additional space, as well as additional teachers, had to be found. The success of Father Stephen’s initiative—he soon had 200 students under his care—was not without criticism, however. Some fiercely anti-Catholic freemasons and their sympathizers protested his work, going so far as to lodge a formal complaint that resulted in a public investigation, the result of which, however, was most favorable to Father Stephen. He not only found approval to continue his school, but what had started as a private enterprise now became public. Stephen was appointed director general of all the schools of Trent, and was awarded a salary as a respected official of the state. As time went on so did the work, responsibilities multiplied, and the opportunity to become ever more influential in society, in the lives of individuals and families, grew. In 1816 he was appointed inspector of

all elementary schools in the district of Trent, and made good use of his position to introduce important changes in society, advancing, for example, the education of young girls, whose instruction was, until then, severely limited, not simply due to the neglect of the school system, but because of parents’ unwillingness to recognize the need for their daughters’ intellectual advancement. Stephen also developed a

admiration of students, parents, faculty and government officials alike. For this reason, word of his sudden disappearance came as a great surprise, equally to family, friends, associates and the people of Trent’s public schools in general. So baffling was the news of his departure, and so certain was the opinion that a simple increase of salary would be enticement enough to bring him back, that initially no great alarm

was sounded. However, as a stream of letters began to make clear Stephen’s determination to take up again his life as a friar, flattery, persuasion, and economic incentives turned into accusations and threats, and finally, to his classification as a criminal and a fugitive, forbidden ever to return to Trent.

Following his return to religious life, Father Stephen was entrusted by the Order with the duty of formation director, first of novices, then of professed student friars, in Rome and in the region of Umbria. Later he was transferred to the famous Augustinian Shrine of Our Mother of Good Counsel in Genazzano, continuing his ministry as novice director, and then as pastor. It was while carrying out this latter responsibility during an epidemic that befell the town, that Father Stephen was taken ill while caring for his parishioners. Without concern for his own well-being, he rushed to the sick and dying,

and contracted the disease himself, from which he died on Sunday, February 27, 1840, at the age of 65. On December 27, 1904, Pope Pius X declared him Blessed.



THE REMAINS OF STEPHEN BELLESINI ARE FOUND AT THE SHRINE OF OUR MOTHER OF GOOD COUNSEL, GENAZZANO, ITALY.

systematic method of instruction and issued detailed regulations for teachers of the public schools, elevating academic life in the region to a new level. At the same time, his concern was always to inspire religious sentiments in both students and teachers, placing religion as the centerpiece toward which all teaching and learning would be directed. From November 1811, until September 1817, Father Stephen Bellesini devoted all his energy to the education and formation of youth. By all accounts, he was eminently successful, winning the

A 150-PAGE BIOGRAPHY OF THE LIFE OF BLESSED STEPHEN BELLESINI, O.S.A., BY FATHER MICHAEL DI GREGORIO, O.S.A., IS AVAILABLE BY CONTACTING THE AUGUSTINIAN PROVINCIAL OFFICE AT VILLANOVA, PA.





# MY PASTORAL YEAR OF SERVICE

BY BROTHER BRYAN KERNS, O.S.A.

When I first sat down with the principal and assistant principal of Saint Augustine School in Andover, Massachusetts, a month or six weeks before school was to begin, they asked me how I was with math. I told them that I was not a “math person.” Their response: well, you’ll be teaching math, but it’ll be fine, because it’s elementary school math, and we both like math, so we’ll help you if you need it, and the classroom teachers will, too. Okay? Sound good? Okay. Sounds good. Meanwhile, in my head, I’m thinking: how did this happen? Into what have I managed to get myself? Why didn’t I say, “No, really, you don’t understand. This is a terrible idea. I had phenomenal math teachers in high school, and that’s the only reason I’m even barely competent. I don’t love math.

I don’t even like it.” A few weeks later, on vacation with family, including a math teacher, the response to my predicament is laughter and mild derision. You? Math? No way. This is going to be great. But math—and some other things—it was. Almost a school year later, when I see my fourth graders doing basic algebra; or my third graders dividing fractions; or my seventh graders graphing; or my fifth graders talking about engineering fields and designing theme parks; or my eighth graders working through theological subtleties in their own terms; or my other students grasping this concept or that idea with which they might have struggled, all I can do is look on with a little bit of wonder. The same wonder I experience when they win basketball championships,

or rock the school play, or win spelling bees, or demonstrate a kindness to a classmate, or when they ask God to bless every single adult who walks into the room every single time one enters. Sure. Math. Teach math. I can do that. But what I have done really isn’t all that special. It was the task I was given. Those students did the hard part. I just had a bit more knowledge and experience than they did at the time I taught them what I taught them. They had to do the heavy lifting. And it’s their achievement. And God’s. But not mine. Just don’t ask me to do science. You think I’m talking about an elementary school? I am. I’m also talking about a pastoral year as part of my initial formation with the Augustinians. Except in that scenario, I’m the student, and I have a lot of teachers, including my own students. My classroom teachers number a multitude: my brother friars; the parishioners whom we serve at Saint Augustine’s; my colleagues at the school; our parish staff; the staff and residents at Mary Immaculate Health Care Services in Lawrence; the guests, the staff, and my fellow volunteers at Lazarus House Ministries; our religious education students; and my family and friends who listen to me tell stories about life in an active apostolate. After nearly five years studying theology, I was quite happy to leave a formation house and move into some sort of application of that learning. What I think is difficult to appreciate as one enters into this experience is that it’s another sort of learning. The application of the classroom is important, essential, integral, but what’s really happening on a pastoral year is the formation of a new



## BROTHER BRYAN TEACHING MATH ENRICHMENT TO THIRD GRADE STUDENTS.

base of knowledge and experience that has to interact with the book learning, fusing to form a minister. I spend two days a week at the school, teaching, going to events, interacting with students and families, and the perilous “other duties as assigned.” Two days a week, I’m at a local food pantry, helping prepare for and participating in distribution of food that works its way to a few thousand people each week, and I have also led the creation and implementation of a program that brings our 8th grade students to the food pantry at Lazarus House for a couple hours of service a week, building on a long partnership between our parish, school, and Lazarus House. I lead Communion Services and do visits with senior citizens at Mary Immaculate, often just listening to the stories people tell about their lives, occasionally offering some little bit of insight as a young friar talking to someone decades wiser than me. I teach Confirmation class to 10th graders for our religious education program. More generally, I assist with parish functions like funerals, baptisms, liturgical planning, Sunday Masses, and the exciting “other duties as assigned.” That’s all the apostolic activity, but I also have a community. Our friars are experienced in

education, parochial ministry, provincial administration, and all have many years in the Order, resulting in many stories and a lot of questions coming from me. My experience of community life in an active apostolate has been heartening. We eat together. We pray together. We laugh together. We sit together. We talk together. There’s not much more for which an Augustinian in my position could ask.

Math. Math? Really? Sure. Why not? The achievement isn’t mine. It’s God’s. And for whatever kind of teacher I am to my students, I am a student to them, and to all of those to and with whom I minister, all the more. The subject they’re teaching me, more than anything else, comes from Augustine’s sermons on the First Letter of John: “Love, and do what you will.” Math. Sure. But, please, no science.



**Bryan with Debbie Scionti** (director of mission for Mary Immaculate Health Care Services in Lawrence, Mass) The dog is Aimée, a labradoodle who “works” at Mary Immaculate a few days a week.



**Ken Campbell, food coordinator, Brother Bryan and Mike Shea, assistant food coordinator** for Lazarus House Ministries, in Lawrence, Mass.



**Brother Bryan is pictured assisting Seán Cardinal O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap., and Prior Provincial Michael Di Gregorio, O.S.A.,** as they bless a new statue of Saint Augustine following the 150th Anniversary Mass at Saint Augustine Church in Andover Mass.





THE SOLEMN OPENING OF THE DIOCESAN PROCESS OF THE  
CAUSE OF BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION OF

# Father Bill Atkinson, O.S.A.

BY FATHER MICHAEL DI GREGORIO, O.S.A.

*April 24th is observed throughout the Augustinian world as the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Augustine.*

We recall on this day the dramatic event recorded in Book VIII of the *Confessions* that brought to a climax Augustine's surrender to God's grace and his resolve to request baptism. This decision likewise marked for Augustine a commitment to embrace celibacy and to live thereafter as a servant of God, that is, as a monk. For this reason, we Augustinians look to Augustine's conversion not only as the beginning of his life as a Catholic, but also the start of his journey as a religious. This date and this feast were chosen, therefore, as a fitting day to celebrate the official opening of the diocesan process for the beatification and canonization of our

Augustinian brother, Father Bill Atkinson. Ever since Archbishop Charles Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., in September 2015, accepted the request of the Order's Postulator General, Josef Sciberras, O.S.A., to introduce the Cause—motivated by the recommendations of many people—the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova has sought opportunities to bring awareness of Father Bill, his message, and his spirituality to people of the Archdiocese and beyond. The Father Bill Atkinson Guild was established for this very purpose, as well as to create an association of prayer for the progress of the Cause and for prayer intentions that have been received. The Guild also gathers donations for the material needs associated with the process. In addition to the various initiatives of promotion, prayer and fundraising, there are formal stages that comprise the process now underway. The April 24th event marks a significant phase along the way. The road to beatification and canonization is, in the

fullest sense, a process. One of the first steps of this process is an inquiry into an individual's life, writings, character, spirituality, etc. This inquiry takes place in the diocese in which the Servant of God died. Father Bill not only ended his earthly journey in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, he lived almost the entirety of his life within it. The local ordinary or diocesan bishop is the one who is responsible for overseeing this phase through his appointment of two commissions—an historic commission, which is charged with examination of all documents concerning the candidate's life and

reputation; and the tribunal, which interviews witnesses who present testimony concerning the candidate. In a case such as this one, many of the witnesses will be relatives, friars and laity, who have first-hand knowledge of Father Bill. The bishop formally makes known the fact that he has received the request to begin the process and asks people of the archdiocese for information that can be useful, for or against the case. The diocesan process is preceded by the celebration of the Eucharist by the Archbishop. It takes place in the Church of Saint Thomas of Villanova adjoining the Villanova Monastery. Following the Mass, the diocesan process is officially opened by the Archbishop with the participation of the Postulator General and the oath taking of the three members of the historic commission who are experts in historical and archival material. Also taking their oath are the members of the Tribunal: a priest delegate of the archbishop, an expert in canon law, a notary and an assistant notary. Finally, the Postulator General also takes an oath. These oaths are solemn pledges to observe confidentiality regarding the work at hand and not to hide anything that might obscure the truth. Subsequent to the opening ceremonies, which are public and unfold in the same church building, appointments are arranged for witnesses to appear before the full Tribunal, with the notary drawing up the acts of each session. This part of the process can require considerable time, depending on the number of witnesses

to be interviewed. Toward the end of these sessions, the Tribunal visits the places associated with the Servant of God to determine that there are no signs of unlawful, public or official devotion. The office of the Postulation has the opportunity to review the acts of the diocesan inquiry, after which two copies of all documents are made. The original acts remain in the archives of the archdiocese and one copy is forwarded to the archives of the Congregation of Saints, while the other is given to the Postulator. The last session of the Tribunal is held in a solemn and public way, chaired by the Archbishop, in which every official makes an oath that he has done his duty. Finally, the Congregation of Saints studies the documents to verify that the norms were observed and that the acts are valid, without passing judgment on the contents themselves. In this way, the first phase of the process unfolds. All the while, of course, we continue to seek opportunities to bring Father Bill to the attention of the wider Church. We encourage people to have recourse to Father Bill's intercession, and we ask God for confirmation that the path we are on is the one God himself desires. This confirmation, by way of a substantiated miracle, is what will move the process along to beatification. It should be said that many people who have known Father Bill are careful, and attentive enough to observe that the aim of this entire process is not to make Father Bill a saint, but rather to have the Church officially proclaim him such!

## AT-A-GLANCE: THE ROAD TO BEATIFICATION AND SAINTHOOD

### APRIL 24, 2017 – THE SOLEMN OPENING OF THE CAUSE

Archbishop Charles Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., solemnly opens the Cause for Beatification and Canonization of Father Bill Atkinson, O.S.A. The diocese where a person died is entrusted with the responsibility of conducting a thorough, unbiased and truthful investigation preceding the recommendation to Rome.

### SWEARING IN OF THE HISTORIC COMMISSION

The Historic Commission Examines Father Bill's writings, life and character.

### SWEARING IN OF THE TRIBUNAL

The Tribunal consists of a priest delegate of the Archbishop, a canon law expert and two notaries. The Tribunal Interviews witnesses who knew Father Bill or testify about favors or healings they have received through Father Bill's intercession.

### FORMAL DISCOVERY ENDS

The original copies of the findings are kept in the archives of the Archdiocese.

### COPIES OF THE FINDINGS

Copies are sent to archives of the Congregation of Saints at the Roman Curia and archives of the Postulator General at the Augustinian General Curia in Rome.

### MIRACLES

A substantiated miracle is what will move the process along to beatification. One additional miracle, post-beatification, is needed for canonization.



JOSEF SCIBERRAS, O.S.A.,  
Postulator General of the  
Augustinian Order

ARCHBISHOP CHARLES J.  
CHAPUT, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop  
of Philadelphia

MICHAEL DI GREGORIO, O.S.A.,  
Prior Provincial of the Province  
of Saint Thomas of Villanova

## JOIN THE FATHER BILL ATKINSON GUILD

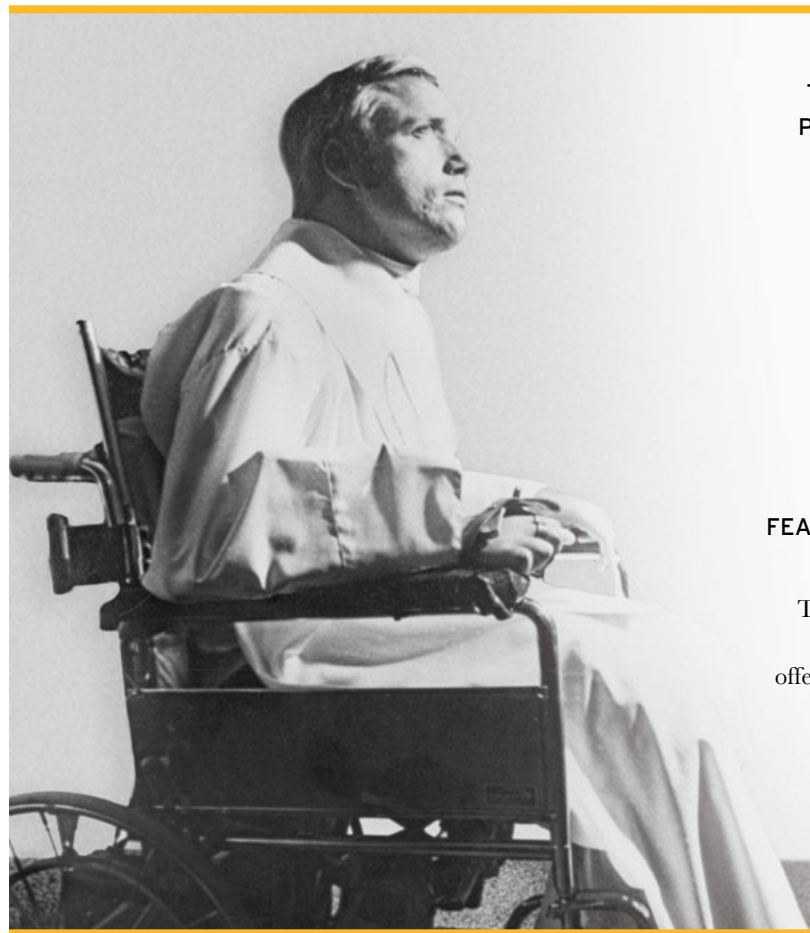
Learn about Father Bill Atkinson, O.S.A., and his Cause for Sainthood!

VISIT [WWW.AUGUSTINIAN.ORG/THE-CAUSE](http://WWW.AUGUSTINIAN.ORG/THE-CAUSE)



## NEWS AND NOTES

FROM THE PROVINCE OF SAINT THOMAS  
OF VILLANOVA AND THE AUGUSTINIAN ORDER



**THE ORDER OF SAINT AUGUSTINE AND THE  
PROVINCE OF SAINT THOMAS OF VILLANOVA  
ARE HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE**

**The Solemn Opening of the  
diocesan process of The Cause of  
Beatification and Canonization**

**of our confrere  
THE SERVANT OF GOD  
WILLIAM ATKINSON, O.S.A.**

**HELD MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2017  
FEAST OF THE CONVERSION OF SAINT AUGUSTINE**

The Solemn Ceremony of the Opening of the Cause  
followed the Celebration of the Eucharist  
offered by The Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.  
Archbishop of Philadelphia  
at Saint Thomas of Villanova Church  
Villanova University, Villanova, PA

*For more information see page 18*



### Lecture on Augustinian Mission to Italian Immigrants in the 20th Century Given by Prior Provincial Michael Di Gregorio, O.S.A.

On Wednesday, March 29, 2017, Prior Provincial Michael Di Gregorio, O.S.A., delivered a lecture in the Speakers' Corner of Falvey Memorial Library at Villanova University for the Alfred F. Mannella and Rose T. Lauria-Mannella Endowed Distinguished Speaker Series. Since 2009, the Mannella lecture series has invited local scholars from the Italian community to Falvey. Father Di Gregorio's previous assignments include serving the Order in Rome, as well as an assignment as Director of the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia in Philadelphia. Father Di Gregorio's talk, "The Birth of a Mission to South Philadelphia Italians: A Friars' Tale," focused on the Order's formation of the Philadelphia Vice Province, an Italian-Augustinian mission to serve and educate immigrants of Philadelphia at the start of the 20th century. "As an Augustinian," said Father Di Gregorio, "I am greatly interested in the history of our Order, which includes here in the United States significant ministry among Italian-Americans. The Augustinian way of life is built upon the two pillars of action and contemplation. Trying to be faithful to both is the invitation of each day."

### Nicholas Martorano, O.S.A., Featured in the *Italian-American Herald*



Father Nicholas Martorano, O.S.A., longtime pastor of Saint Nicholas of Tolentine parish in South Philadelphia, was the subject of a feature, "Achievers," in the *Italian-*

*American Herald*, a local area newspaper that features news, events and people, particularly those of Italian-American heritage. Father Nick was baptized at the church, where he is currently pastor, and was raised in the neighborhood. He also was a teacher at Saint Nick's grade school, a parish the Augustinians administered. Eventually, he joined the Augustinian Order, and since his ordination as a deacon, Father Nick has served in ministries initiated to serve Italian immigrants. In late 2016, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, announced that the parish of Annunciation, B.V.M., would be partnered with Saint Nicholas of Tolentine, with Father Nick serving as pastor of both parishes. Saint Nicholas of Tolentine is an Italian national parish. There is still a regular Sunday Mass celebrated in Italian, and the parish holds an Italian Festival each fall. The ministry in South Philadelphia to Italian immigrants in the last century, and Italian-Americans today, is one the Augustinian Friars—especially Father Nick—are grateful for and happy to fulfill.

*You can read the article about Father Nick by clicking on this link: [ITALIAN-AMERICAN HERALD](#)*

### John Deary, O.S.A., Named Director of Augustinian Laity for the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova



Father John Deary, O.S.A., was recently named Director of Augustinian Laity for the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova. In this position, Father Deary will be in

charge of various lay groups within the Province, encouraging the growth of those

groups and the development of new groups in order to share and promote Augustinian Spirituality. Presently, there are several lay groups who currently meet and are generally associated with current or former Augustinian parishes in the Bronx, New York; Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania; Cape Coral, Florida; and upstate New York.

*If you would like to know more about Augustinian Spirituality, contact*  
[COMMUNICATIONS@AUGUSTINIAN.ORG](mailto:COMMUNICATIONS@AUGUSTINIAN.ORG)

### Archbishop Carroll Graduate Roy E. Campbell, Jr., Named Bishop



Father Roy Edward Campbell, Jr., a 1965 graduate of Archbishop Carroll High School, Washington, D.C., and a priest in that archdiocese, was named auxiliary

bishop of Washington, D.C., by Pope Francis. Archbishop John Carroll High School was administered by the Augustinians from its founding in 1951, until 1989. Saint Augustine remains the patron saint of the school. Augustine, whose talents took him from North Africa to Italy, found direction and fulfillment in the faith he embraced with baptism at the hands of Ambrose. Named for John Carroll, the first Bishop of the United States, the motto of the school, "*pro deo et patria*" (For God and Country), was chosen by Cardinal O'Boyle, who oversaw the founding of the school. Cardinal O'Boyle saw the school as having a purpose beyond education of the students, "to serve as a beacon for the nation of 'the right conception of the nature, value and dignity of the human person.'"

*The Augustinians congratulate Bishop Roy Edward Campbell!*

### Kevin DePrinzio, O.S.A., Successfully Defends Dissertation at Catholic University of America



On February 24, 2017, Father Kevin DePrinzio, O.S.A., successfully defended his dissertation, entitled *Your Word Pierced My Heart, and I Fell in Love: Teresa of Avila's*

*Reading of Augustine of Hippo's Confessions.* Father Kevin, who has been studying at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., earned his PhD in Spirituality/Historical Theology.

*Congratulations Father Kevin!*

### John Futoshi Matsuo, O.S.A.,



### Ordained to the Priesthood for the Vicariate of Japan

John Futoshi Matsuo, O.S.A., of the Vicariate of the Augustinian Martyrs of Japan, was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Joseph Mitsuaki Takami, Archbishop of Nagasaki, Japan, on April 22, 2017 at Our Lady of Consolation, Shiroyama Catholic Church, Nagasaki, Japan. Pictured above, Father John Futoshi Matsuo, O.S.A., Archbishop Joseph Mitsuaki Takami and Father Thomas Hiroyuki Shibata, O.S.A., regional superior of the Vicariate.



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Mother & Daughter  
Boston Marathon Bombing  
Survivors Presented  
Father Bill Atkinson  
Humanitarian Award

On Thursday evening, February 23, 2017, the Office of Disability Services at Villanova University presented its Father Bill Atkinson, O.S.A., Humanitarian Award to Celeste and Sydney Corcoran, a mother and daughter who were severely injured in the April 25, 2013, bombing at the Boston Marathon. Celeste Corcoran was at the finish line waiting for her sister to complete the marathon when the first bomb exploded. Celeste suffered a ruptured eardrum, and both her legs were severely injured and had to be amputated. Her daughter Sydney nearly bled to death due to shrapnel which had penetrated her thigh.

The evening included a question and answer period led by NBC10 news anchor and Villanova alum, Keith Jones, where Celeste and Sydney answered questions and retold their experiences during the bombing. They spoke candidly about the whole family’s struggles and the people who helped them get through the pain and anguish. Celeste ended the night by saying “We’re not special. Everybody here has what we have. You have it inside of you to overcome adversity that you didn’t



SYDNEY AND CELESTE CORCORAN HOLD THE FATHER BILL ATKINSON, O.S.A., HUMANITARIAN AWARD

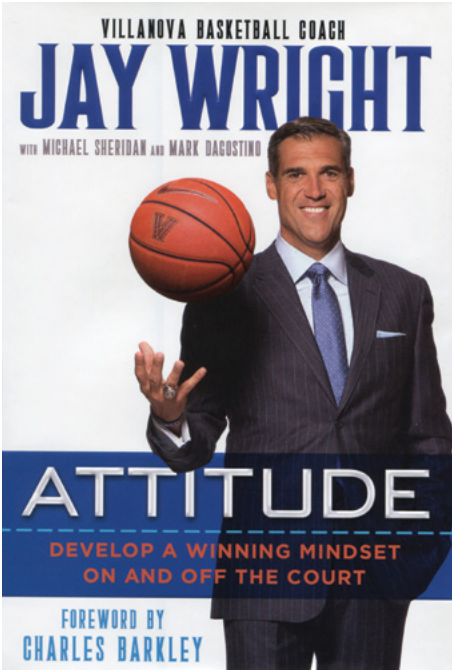
think was coming at you. If you are ever challenged the way that we have been, choose to live. Live a great life.”

Fr. Bill, who was injured in a toboggan accident while a novice, was the first quadriplegic to be ordained a priest. In 2012, the Office of Disability Services at Villanova University established the Father Bill Atkinson, O.S.A., Humanitarian Award to recognize an individual, group or organization, who expresses the spirit and service that Fr. Bill personified.

Villanova University’s Office of Disability Service and LEVEL, a student group at the University, endeavor to change the perception of persons with disabilities, on the campus and beyond the campus.

Attitude, a Book by  
Villanova Men’s Basketball  
Coach Jay Wright

Jay Wright, coach of the Villanova University men’s basketball team, who led the team to the 2016 NCAA Championship, has written a book, *Attitude*, which chronicles the team’s path throughout the 2015-2016 season, culminating in their victory at the finals in Houston. In the book, Wright recalls stories from his own childhood, his own coaching career that led him to his current position, as well as the account of Villanova’s championship season. Coach Wright provides insights for developing and fixing characteristics in the players on the court that serve well anywhere. The book is available at Amazon.



LOOKING AHEAD

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Convocation of members of  
the Federation of Augustinians  
of North America (FANA),  
June 11–16, 2017, Villanova  
University, PA

A convocation of all members of the Federation of Augustinians of North America (FANA), comprised of the three provinces in the United States and the Province of Canada, gather to celebrate Augustinian brotherhood. The Prior General in Rome, Father Alejandro Moral, O.S.A., is expected to attend the convocation.

International Congress for  
Augustinian Centers for Education,  
July 24–28, 2017, Villanova  
University, Villanova, PA

The Congress will provide the opportunity for those in the ministry of Augustinian education to meet and share their experiences. Three main talks and several workshops will be presented during the Congress. Information can be found on the Order’s website: [www.augustinians.net](http://www.augustinians.net)

Formation Gathering (FANA)  
August 3–5, 2017, University  
of San Diego, San Diego, CA

This is a gathering of all men in all stages of formation from the provinces of North America.

First Profession of Vows (FANA)  
August 5, 2017 Founder’s Chapel,  
University of San Diego,  
San Diego, CA

All novices in the North American provinces will profess their first vows in the Order of Saint Augustine.



KEEPING TRACK

*Following the vow of obedience,  
friars find themselves called to  
where they are needed. Each issue of  
The Augustinian hopes to connect  
you with some familiar faces as we  
provide brief updates on friars serving  
throughout the Province. Watch here to  
track down that old classmate, pastor,  
chemistry teacher, chaplain, philosophy  
professor, co-worker or friend.*



John F.  
Deary, O.S.A.

John F. Deary, O.S.A., was received into the Order in 1960, and after his novitiate year, he professed first vows on September 10, 1961. He received a BA from Villanova and went to Augustinian College, Washington, D.C., for his theological studies and received an MA. He also received an MA in Mathematics from Villanova. He was ordained to the priesthood on November 19, 1966, at Saint Denis, Havertown, Pa. Fr. John was first assigned to teach at Archbishop Carroll High School, Washington, D.C. He has served at Saint Nicholas of Tolentine, Bronx; Saint Denis, Havertown; Saint Augustine, Lawrence, Mass; Saint Augustine, Casselberry, Fla.; and Saint Nicholas of Tolentine in Jamaica, N.Y. While in Florida, he taught at Neumann High School, Golden Gate. For two years, he served as the Province’s vocation director. After graduate studies in spirituality and religious formation at Saint Louis University, he was assigned to the National Novitiate. In 1993, he was assigned as pastor to Saint Katharine Drexel, Cape Coral, Fla. In July 2016, he was assigned as parochial vicar at Our Mother of Good Counsel, Bryn Mawr, Pa. Recently, Fr. Deary was appointed Director of Augustinian Laity for the Province.



Michael  
J. Hilden,  
O.S.A.

Michael J. Hilden, O.S.A., began his novitiate year in September 1965 and professed first vows on September 10, 1966. He attended the Washington Theological Union, graduating with an MA in Theology. He was ordained on June 16, 1973, in the Church of Our Mother of Consolation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On September 4, 1973, he joined the Augustinian missionaries from the Province of Saint Thomas in Japan, where for the first two years he studied Japanese. He has served at St. Monica Church, Nagoya; Our Mother of Consolation, Nagasaki; Shiroyama Church, Nagasaki; and St. Augustine’s Church, Tokyo. He has served as formation director and novice master at the Friary of St. Augustine, Fukuoka, at St. Augustine’s Tokyo, and at Shiroyama, Nagasaki. He currently serves at St. Augustine, Fukuoka as the local superior; Associate pastor and the principal of Sasaoka Catholic Kindergarten. He has an avid interest in the abolition of nuclear weapons and the preservation of the Peace Constitution of Japan.



James D.  
Paradis,  
O.S.A.

James D. Paradis, O.S.A., was received into the Order in 1986. After his novitiate year, he professed first vows on August 8, 1987. He attended Augustinian College and the Washington Theological Union, earning an MA in Theology. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 29, 1991, at Our Mother of Good Counsel, Bryn Mawr, Pa. Fr. Jim’s first assignment was to Saint Denis, Havertown, Pa. Following this, he worked in Campus Ministry at Merrimack College, North Andover, Mass. He earned a D Min in Pastoral Psychology at the Andover-Newton Theological School. He worked as a pastoral psychotherapist and was also adjunct professor at Merrimack College. He has served as a Province Counselor under Provincial Donald F. Reilly, O.S.A. (2002-2008) and under Provincial Anthony M. Genovese, O.S.A.

(2010-2014). He has also held the position as the Province’s director of personnel. On December 7, 2013, he was installed as director of novices at the inter-provincial novitiate in Racine, Wisconsin.



William  
F. Waters,  
O.S.A.

William F. Waters, O.S.A., was received into the Order in 1965, and after his novitiate year he professed first vows on September 10, 1966. He earned an MA in Education from Villanova. He went to Augustinian College, Washington, D.C, for theological studies and he earned an MA in Theology at Washington Theological Union. He was ordained to the priesthood on August 28, 1971, at Saint Denis, Havertown, Pa. Fr. Bill was first assigned to Saint Augustine, Lawrence, Mass. He has also served at Saint Nicholas of Tolentine, Jamaica, N.Y., and at Saint Mary in Lawrence. He served as the Province’s vocation director at the Augustinian Collegiate Seminary at Villanova and as director of formation at Augustinian College. While living at the Friary at St. Mary, Lawrence, he served at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Methuen. In 2008, he moved to St. Ambrose Friary, Andover, and served in Campus Ministry at Merrimack College. In August 2014, he was named pastor of St. Augustine’s Church, Philadelphia.

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Our Mother of Good Counsel  
31 Pennswood Road  
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

TO CONTACT FATHER HILDEN:  
Sasaoka Catholic Church  
Chuo-Ku, Sasaoka 1-16-1  
Fukuoka 810-0034, Japan

TO CONTACT FATHER PARADIS:  
Augustinian Novitiate Community  
4339 Douglas Avenue  
Racine, WI 53402-2956

TO CONTACT FATHER WATERS:  
Saint Augustine  
243 North Lawrence Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1195



## OUR PROVINCE CALENDAR

# Save the date!

FRIDAY, AUGUST 18, 2017

### Cascia Classic Golf Outing Westover Country Club Jeffersonville, PA

To register visit:  
[www.augustinianfund.org/events/golf](http://www.augustinianfund.org/events/golf)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2017  
(By invitation only)

### Saints Thomas of Villanova Leadership and Augustine Legacy Societies

Annual Mass & Brunch  
Saint Augustine Friary  
Villanova, PA

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2017

### Profile in Augustinian Leadership

Speaker To Be Announced  
Overbrook Golf Club  
Villanova, PA  
visit: [www.augustinianfund.org/events](http://www.augustinianfund.org/events)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2017

### #Giving Tuesday

A global day of giving, dedicated to helping others.  
visit: [www.augustinianfund.org/donate](http://www.augustinianfund.org/donate)

JANUARY 2018

### Infiniti Coaches' Charity Challenge



BY MADONNA SUTTER  
DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

Dear Friends of the Augustinians,

As I write this letter, we are busily making preparations for the Province's Inaugural Saint Augustine Medal Dinner which will be held in New York City on April 27. Our inaugural recipients, Patty and Jay Wright, are well deserving of this award, which was created to honor those who exhibit Augustinian values in their professional and personal lives. We are grateful to the Wrights for allowing us to recognize them.

The response for the Medal Dinner has been overwhelming with over 500 guests who will join us for this celebratory occasion in Manhattan. The Province is greatly indebted to the leadership of the dinner co-chairs — Fr. Rob Hagan, O.S.A., Paul Tramontano (VU '83) and Bob DeConcini (VU '82), in assembling an impressive dinner committee comprised of friends, classmates and colleagues who offered their time, talent and treasure toward making this initiative a grand success. We are grateful, as well, to all—friars and benefactors, alumni and their friends—who have honored Patty and Jay while supporting the Augustinians' vocation and formation programs.

The Medal dinner is a marvelous opportunity to tell the story of Augustinian life and ministry and the special way in which the spirit and ideals of Saint Augustine and the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova are shared also by men and women like the Wrights, who demonstrate Augustinian values of humility and charity in promoting the dignity and worth of every individual and fostering unity and collaboration wherever and however possible. The evening is an opportunity for many others to come to know better the Province's mission, and the way in which to further it through their material support as well as their participation in these same Augustinian principles.

On behalf of the Province, I want express heartfelt gratitude to our good friends Patty and Jay for accepting the Inaugural Saint Augustine Medal with grace and humility. I offer, as well, special thanks to all who have exercised leadership in making this celebration possible, to our many volunteers and staff, and to all who have supported this night through their generosity and presence.

As this magazine will have gone to print before the dinner occurs, we promise a full re-cap and many photos in the fall issue of *The Augustinian*.



## SAINT MONICA LOYALTY SOCIETY

*An Augustinian Fund giving society named in honor of Saint Augustine's mother,  
recognizing loyal donors who have consistently made gifts to the  
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### MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- Remembered in the daily Masses of the Augustinians
- *The Augustinian* magazine
- Recognition in the Province's Annual Report
- Augustinian E-News
- Special event invitations
- An opportunity to support the friars' way of life and ministries

**The Province has more than 462 Saint Monica Loyalty Society members in its inaugural year.**

**To sustain your membership and reach new recognition milestones at three years, five years, and 10+ years, and for your convenience, make a gift every year with a recurring gift.**

**For questions or to learn how to set up a recurring gift, please contact Cynthia Staniszewski, Associate Director of Advancement, at [cynthia.staniszewski@augustinian.org](mailto:cynthia.staniszewski@augustinian.org) or (610) 527-3330, ext. 239.**

THE Augustinian Fund   
*Celebrating 10 years | 2006-2016*

The Augustinian Fund—established in 2006—helps to provide for the care of infirm friars and those others who are no longer able to engage in full-time ministry. It also assists candidates and young friars preparing for the Augustinian way of life as well as ministries in Japan and Peru, the work of the Augustinian Volunteers, and the Province's Justice and Peace Ministries, including the Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor.





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For more information, contact Madonna Sutter, Director of Advancement  
at [madonna.sutter@augustinian.org](mailto:madonna.sutter@augustinian.org) or 610-527-3330, ext. 265